



Report

The capacities of UN agencies, funds and programmes to sustain peace

An independent review

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Contents

Acknowledgements	3
About the authors	3
List of acronyms	6
Executive summary	8
Recommended actions	12
Introduction	15
1. Sustaining peace: the UN's challenge	18
1.1. The UN's role in global peace and security	18
1.2. The concept of 'sustaining peace'	19
1.3. Sustaining peace: from concept to operations	19
1.4. Sustaining peace: a system-wide responsibility?	20
1.5. Sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	20
2. Conflict trends and addressing the root causes of conflict	21
2.1. Conflict causes, drivers and triggers	21
2.2. Addressing conflict causes, drivers and triggers	21
2.3. AFPs' potential in addressing the root causes of conflict	22
3. AFPs' capacities for sustaining peace: vision and leadership	26
3.1. AFPs' vision and understanding of 'sustaining peace'	26
3.2. AFPs' governing bodies	27
3.3. Resident Coordinators	27
3.4. The Secretary-General's leadership	28
4. AFPs' capacities for sustaining peace: programming	30
4.1. Conflict and context analysis	30
4.2. Coordinated planning, tools and implementation	31
4.3. Programme design and conflict sensitivity	33

4.4. Integrating gender in programme design and implementation	33
4.5. Monitoring, evaluation and learning	34
<hr/>	
5. AFPs' capacities for sustaining peace: resources	35
5.1. Human resources	35
5.2. Financial resources	36
<hr/>	
6. AFPs' capacities for sustaining peace: partnerships	38
6.1. Partnerships among AFPs at HQ, regional and country level	38
6.2. Partnerships between AFPs and the UN Secretariat	38
6.3. Partnerships with the World Bank	39
6.4. Partnerships with national actors	40
6.5. Partnerships with the private sector	41
<hr/>	
7. Conclusion and ways forward	43
<hr/>	
Annex 1 Colombia case study: a summary	47
<hr/>	
Annex 2 Kyrgyzstan case study: a summary	52
<hr/>	
Annex 3 Lebanon case study: a summary	56
<hr/>	
Annex 4 Liberia case study: a summary	60
<hr/>	
Annex 5 Philippines case study: a summary	64
<hr/>	
Annex 6 Terms of reference	67
<hr/>	
Annex 7 List of AFPs included in the review	69
<hr/>	
Annex 8 List of interview questions	70
<hr/>	
Annex 9 Online survey	72
<hr/>	
Annex 10 Full bibliography	82
<hr/>	

List of acronyms

AFPs	agencies, funds and programmes	IMF	International Monetary Fund
AGE	Advisory Group of Experts	INGO	international NGO
BCPR	Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery	IOM	International Organization for Migration
CDA	Conflict and Development Analysis	ISF	Integrated Strategic Framework
CEB	Chief Executives Board	JMAC	Joint Mission Analysis Centre
CFF	Concessional Financing Facility	JSC	Joint Steering Committee
CPP	Communist Party of the Philippines	LCRP	Lebanon Crisis Response Plan
CSO	civil society organisation	LRF	Lebanon Recovery Fund
DSCL	Deputy Special Coordinator for Lebanon	M&E	monitoring and evaluation
DFID	UK Department for International Development	MDTF	Multi-Donor Trust Fund
DPA	Department of Political Affairs	MEL	monitoring, evaluation and learning
DPKO	Department for Peacekeeping Operations	MIGA	Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo	MILF	Moro Islamic Liberation Front (Philippines)
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General	MNLF	Moro National Liberation Front (Philippines)
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations	MONUSCO	UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council	MOU	memorandum of understanding (Philippines)
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	MRU	Mano River Union
ELN	National Liberation Army (Colombia)	MTDF	Medium Term Development Framework
EU	European Union	NDCC	National Disaster Coordinating Council
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization	NDF	National Democratic Front (Philippines)
FCS	fragile and conflict-affected states/situations	NGO	non-governmental organisation
FDI	foreign direct investment	NNGO	national NGO
FARC	Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia	NPA	New People's Army (Philippines)
FASTRAC	Facility for Advisory Support for Transition Capacities	NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
FTE	full-time equivalent	OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
GAI	Global Acceleration Instrument	ODI	Overseas Development Institute
GCVP	Global Campaign for Violence Prevention	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
GFP	Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and corrections	OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
GLTN	Global Land Tool Network	OPAPP	Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator	OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
HIPPO	High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations	OSESG	Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General
IANYD	Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development	PBC	Peace Building Commission
IAP	integrated assessment and planning	PBF	Peace Building Fund
IAPT	Inter-Agency Programme Team	PBSO	Peacebuilding Support Office
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee	PDA	Peace and Development Advisor
IDA	International Development Association	PDF	Philippines Development Forum
DP	internally displaced person	PPP	Peacebuilding Priority Plan
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group	RC	Resident Coordinator
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development	RCO	Resident Coordinator Office
IFC	International Finance Corporation	RPBA	Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment
IFI	international financial institution	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
IGC	International Growth Centre	SDRF	Somalian Development and Reconstruction Facility
ILO	International Labour Organization	SG	Secretary-General
		SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence

SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General	UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia
SSWG	Social Stability Working Group	UN MPTF	UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund
UN	United Nations	UN MPTFO	UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS	UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime
UNCT	UN Country Team	UNOPS	UN Office for Project Services
UNDAF	UN Development Assistance Framework	UNRCCA	UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia
UNDG	UN Development Group	UNRWA	UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNDOCO	UN Development Operations Coordination Office	UNSC	UN Security Council
UNDP	UN Development Programme	UNSCOL	Office of the UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon
UNDDR	UN Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration	UNSCR	UN Security Council Resolution
UNEG	UN Evaluation Group	UNSF	UN Strategic Framework
UNEP	UN Environment Programme	UNSG	UN Secretary-General
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	UNV	UN Volunteers
UNFPA	UN Population Fund	UN Women	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNGA	UN General Assembly	USG	Under-Secretary-General
UN-Habitat	UN Human Settlements Programme	UXO	unexploded ordnance
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees	WFP	World Food Programme
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund	WGT	Working Group on Transitions
UNIDO	UN Industrial Development Organization	WHO	World Health Organization
UNIFIL	UN Interim Force in Lebanon	WHS	World Humanitarian Summit
UNISDR	UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction		
UNMAS	UN Mine Action Service		
UNMEER	UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response		

Executive summary

The UN Charter focuses on uniting nations around efforts to protect human rights, foster social and economic development and, perhaps most importantly, prevent armed conflict and maintain international peace and security. In the more than seven decades since the UN's creation, threats to national and international peace and security have evolved significantly. Conflicts have become primarily intra-state, more asymmetric and more urbanised. Armed groups espousing regional and international agendas have proliferated and the geopolitical environment is highly polarised. Political violence intended to strike fear into the civilian population is on the rise and millions of civilians are subject to levels of violence and abuse that the world had hoped never to see again. Clearly, the UN system, and the international community at large, is failing in its goal of saving 'succeeding generations from the scourge of war'.

The 'sustaining peace' agenda emerged in 2015 amidst increasing calls for a more effective and cost-efficient UN system that can meet these challenges to global peace and security. The concept was first introduced by the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) conducting the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture (UN, 2015). It was subsequently adopted by the General Assembly (UNGA) and Security Council (UNSC) in 2016 (see S/RES/2282 and A/RES/70/262), which explicitly tasked the UN system, including agencies, funds and programmes (AFPs), to come together to ensure a more 'coordinated, coherent and integrated' effort aimed at supporting national actors to sustain peace (UNSC, 2016).

This review considers the capacities of AFPs with a view to recommending how they may be augmented in order to enhance the wider UN system's efforts to sustain peace. It was commissioned by the UN Development Group (UNDG) as part of the follow-up to a commitment by the former Secretary-General (UNSG) in his report on the future of UN peace operations (A/70/357-S/2015/682, 2 September 2015, para. 42). It was intended as neither a detailed audit of capacities of AFPs, nor an evaluation of the impact of their work in relation to sustaining peace.

The research included a review of existing literature; semi-structured interviews with over 300 key stakeholders within and outside the UN system, at headquarters and at country level; and an online survey of UN and non-UN stakeholders, including all the AFPs covered in this review, Secretariat departments, senior UN officials, specialised international NGOs and independent experts. Five case studies were conducted, in Colombia, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Liberia and the Philippines. A draft of the present report

was shared with the UN management committee and the steering group for this project, and comments received were taken into consideration in its finalisation.

The concept of sustaining peace

As defined by the UNSC and UNGA, the concept of 'sustaining peace' espouses a whole-of-system approach that builds on all three pillars of the UN system – human rights, peace and security, and development – in a mutually reinforcing way. It pushes peacebuilding beyond a technical, narrow focus on project-based activities in post-conflict situations, and recognises that sustaining peace applies to all phases: prior to the outbreak; during the conflict; and after it has abated (Mahmoud and Ó Súilleabháin, 2016). Peace is therefore understood as a long-term process of social change that requires the engagement of every UN agency and mission.

As highlighted by stakeholders in this review, the current definition of sustaining peace presents both opportunities and challenges. For many, the concept is too diffuse and vague, enabling almost any activity to be considered as part of this approach. Some expressed concerns that, in the absence of a more detailed operational definition, 'sustaining peace' risks becoming a slogan rather than a practical approach, and that it has developed as a top-down policy that is yet to be grounded in the knowledge and experience of the UN's staff and field operations. However, there is also consensus that, in as much as the concept aims to get the UN 'back to basics', i.e. to the core peace and security mandate articulated in the UN Charter, it is an important normative development and offers opportunities or incentives for a more coherent and comprehensive approach to supporting peace in fragile and conflict-affected countries. There is also a clear consensus, including among Member States, that sustaining peace is closely tied to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): 'sustaining peace and strong institutions [are] critical for achieving all the goals, and, in turn, the entire 2030 agenda can contribute to sustaining peace – before, during and after conflict' (ECOSOC and PBC, 2016).

Conflict causes, drivers and triggers and AFPs' capacities to address them

In its report *States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence* (OECD, 2016), the OECD elaborates five dimensions of fragility that help summarise the root

causes, drivers and triggers of violence and armed conflict: economic, environmental, political, security and societal. In general terms, this review suggests that AFPs have an extensive array of technical and other capacities that can be helpful in addressing these five dimensions. These include, but are not limited to, promoting good governance and democratic values, including the political inclusion of women, minorities and youth (e.g. UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA); supporting the establishment of national rights frameworks, including in thematic areas such as health and education (e.g. UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, UNESCO); building national capacities for security, rule of law and access to justice (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF, UNODC); supporting access to livelihoods and economic opportunities (e.g. ILO, FAO, WFP, UNDP); promoting the free flow of information and an independent media (e.g. UNESCO); supporting and building capacities for technical expertise in managing and facilitating access to natural resources, including land and water (e.g. UN-Habitat, UN Environment); rehabilitation of critical infrastructure (e.g. UNOPS); building capacities for de-mining and raising awareness of mine and unexploded ordnance risks (e.g. UNMAS, UNICEF); and the provision of or support for basic services (e.g. UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNHCR, UNRWA). Beyond these technical capacities, AFPs also play an important role in the UN's wider efforts to support states and their citizens to achieve and sustain peace through upholding and promoting the universal values of the international human rights framework, and by representing a positive investment in these states by the international community.

AFPs' contributions vary considerably in relation to a number of factors, particularly the context itself. Context will determine what types of capacities are required to support a state and its citizens in their search for long-term peace and sustainable development, and who is best placed to provide those capacities. Mandate alone may not confer a significant advantage to an individual AFP. That said, AFPs that have a specific thematic or mandated focus on objectives related to sustaining peace – whether this terminology is used yet or not – are more likely to have analytical and programmatic capacities that can be or are directed at sustaining peace objectives. In practical terms, an AFP's budget, staffing, presence in a country and scale and scope of operations are all variables that will determine any comparative advantage or particular added value in relation to sustaining peace.

AFPs' capacities for sustaining peace: vision and leadership, programming, resources and partnerships

Institutionally, AFPs appreciate the importance of sustaining peace as a system-wide objective at the heart of the UN's global role. However, noting the recent development of the concept, this has yet to filter down to

where it will make a difference – in the operations and programmes implemented by AFPs at country level – and the UN has as yet little systematic evaluation of the extent to which AFPs' objectives, operations and programmes do or could actually help in sustaining peace. For some AFPs, including UNDP, UNESCO, ILO and IOM, the sustaining peace agenda lies at the heart of their existing mandates and areas of intervention. For others, particularly those with a greater humanitarian focus, understanding their role in sustaining peace is more challenging. Overall, the vast majority of AFP staff participating in this review felt that their institutional contribution to the agenda was significant, even if it was indirect or a by-product of their normal programmes and activities. Noting the many competing agendas and operational priorities currently facing AFPs, facilitating the transformational change that is required to reorient them (and the wider UN system) towards sustaining peace will necessitate consistent and clear messaging and objective-setting, including operational and political direction and support from the SG and his leadership team.

The role and leadership of Resident Coordinators (RCs) is clearly central to delivering on the sustaining peace agenda, and the case studies evidence good practice in this regard. However, more broadly the review identified key challenges pertaining to the capacities of RCs and their offices, which, though not new, are likely to impede roll-out of this agenda. The legitimacy and authority of RCs is crucial to their ability to bring AFPs at country level together around a common objective or goal, including sustaining peace. Stakeholders in this review highlighted that the RCs' authority can be undermined where AFPs prioritise accountability to their own headquarters over the RC; by the often limited staffing capacities in RC Offices (RCOs); by a lack of adequate leadership skills among some RCs; and, pre-eminently, by the (perceived) conflict of interest between the supposedly neutral role of an RC in leading the UNCT and their, usually concurrent, leadership of a member organisation of the UNCT (i.e. UNDP). Many stakeholders also expressed concerns that the role of the RC has become synonymous with supporting the host government, even if that government may not be entirely representative of the population, to the effective exclusion in some cases of support to other national actors or agendas that challenge the central government. Overall, the predominant view among the stakeholders in this review is that, in its current form and function, the RC system does not have adequate capacity to deliver the kind of authoritative leadership needed to drive the system-wide change and prioritisation at country level that implementing the sustaining peace agenda requires.

All stakeholders highlighted the importance of adequate conflict or context analysis as the basis for more conflict-sensitive programming and for effective programmes specifically designed to support peace outcomes. However, the majority of interviewees at HQ and field level also

felt that this was where the biggest gap in capacities lies in most AFPs, and across the group of AFPs. Some AFPs do not have the frameworks and staff skills necessary to conduct the kind of sophisticated political context or conflict analysis necessary in sustaining peace contexts. UNDP is an exception, with analytical capacities, including staffing, tools and frameworks (such as the new Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA)), and the analysis that UNDP produces is appreciated by other AFPs at country level. But, more broadly, there is a lack of common or pooled capacity to develop or share such analysis within UNCTs or between UNCTs and UN missions, with many stakeholders pointing to the need to augment staffing capacities in RCOs for this purpose. The most widely held criticisms or concerns regarding conflict analysis, expressed by stakeholders at HQ and in the field, were in relation to a failure to translate whatever conflict or context analysis exists into more conflict-sensitive, politically smart programming.

Views on standard UN assessment and planning tools and their usefulness to the sustaining peace agenda were mixed. Some stakeholders suggested that UNDAFs and ISFs were not fit for the purpose of sustaining peace, though on closer examination it may be that the problems associated with these tools relate more to process and how they are used than to their actual content. UNCTs in the five case studies had all developed sustaining peace-related strategic plans which were more dynamic and responsive to peace-related needs in their context, even if the language of ‘sustaining peace’ was not used. However, translating these joint plans into joint coordinated or joined-up action was more challenging. Stakeholders indicated that AFPs often find it difficult to set aside their institutional mandates and agendas and invest fully in achieving collective outcomes, even where these have been agreed. This may in part be attributed to the perennial problem of competition over funds and visibility, which acts as an obvious disincentive to coordination, as well as AFPs’ different planning cycles and tools.

Interviews at field and HQ levels indicate that capacities for ensuring well-designed programmes targeted at peace outcomes and for ensuring that general programmes are more conflict-sensitive are not always adequate – with some AFPs having greater knowledge and expertise in these areas than others. Most AFPs have institutional frameworks for conflict-sensitive approaches, but the case studies suggest that these are not necessarily resulting in greater conflict sensitivity at country level. Despite some positive examples, the resources and expertise to advance gender equality as it relates to sustaining peace are also limited. Notwithstanding the inherent challenges of measuring programme impact generally, this review indicates that individual and joint capacities for monitoring, evaluating and learning in relation to sustaining peace is weak for most AFPs and UNCTs. From a substantive or technical perspective, most AFPs felt that, institutionally, they had the requisite skills in relation to their entities’ role in sustaining peace, but that greater

investment in the staff they have is required, including through pooling specialised knowledge and upgrading some specific skill-sets, such as analysis and programme design.

Most stakeholders highlighted access to adequate, stable funding that supports multi-year country actions as a key challenge. Funding for operational activities is invariably short-term, fragmented, unpredictable and earmarked, restricting the extent to which AFPs can prioritise and invest resources to meet long-term strategic objectives that characterise sustaining peace. Some interviewees felt that donor funding for peacebuilding, let alone sustaining peace, was being crowded out by other demands. Pooled or common funding mechanisms were seen as offering opportunities or incentives for a more strategic approach by UNCTs that is both more collaborative and more focused on agreed priorities, as evidenced in the Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) in Colombia and, to an extent, the Peace Building Fund (PBF) in Liberia and Kyrgyzstan.

The review highlights the important and comprehensive range of partnerships that AFPs can, and in many cases do, draw upon in their work relating to sustaining peace. Relations among AFPs, and between AFPs and relevant Secretariat departments, have improved in recent years, as articulated by interviewees at HQ and demonstrated in joined-up analysis and strategic planning in the country case studies. Relations with the World Bank have also become much closer and more strategic, including as a result of partnership frameworks. However, there is also a sense among stakeholders, including AFP staff, that notwithstanding these examples, more generally collaboration between AFPs, and between AFPs and Secretariat departments, is still inadequate to the challenge of sustaining peace. This was attributed to various factors, and not necessarily capacity per se. As many stakeholders pointed out, there is little incentive for individual staff and AFPs institutionally to work in a more collaborative way within the UN system.

In the case studies for this review, AFPs bilaterally and collectively demonstrated important relationships with national authorities, including through aligning planning frameworks, responding to government requests for programmatic support, helping ministries through processes of restructuring, reform and development with technical support and advice, and advocating for operational, normative and legislative improvements. Beyond these case studies, however, stakeholders felt that some AFPs/UNCTs were reluctant to take a more forceful stance on key issues, such as political exclusion and human rights, for fear of undermining their relationship with the host government. Some stakeholders also highlighted that the focus is often on central government to the exclusion of sub-national/local government, or parliamentary bodies (unless they are a programme target).

The review also found positive examples of partnerships with national and local civil society, including strong engagement with national and local civil society

organisations in Colombia, and UN Women's global civil society network. But concerns were expressed that, beyond the case studies, engagement with civil society tends to be transactional in nature, rather than a relationship based on equality, and that opportunities for two-way learning and capacity-building are likely being missed.

The capacities of AFPs to deliver on the UN's commitment to sustaining peace is also linked to the behaviour of Member States – and specifically their granting of the political, financial and operational space AFPs need to get on with their work. The UNSC and UNGA have stated that sustaining peace is a shared endeavour, but currently it is difficult to characterise the relationship between AFPs and Member States as a partnership in its truest sense. Donor state funding practices encourage high levels of competition and are at odds with the kind of long-term strategic planning and programming required if AFPs are to have a positive impact on sustaining peace objectives. This behaviour is, in part, a consequence of how AFPs themselves function, and greater efforts are needed to reach agreement to reduce duplication and gaps and improve efficiency, transparency and accountability if smarter or greater funding is to be expected. Politically, the agenda Member States set for the UN system in the UNSC and UNGA is not necessarily reflected by their representatives on AFP governing bodies, some of whom are sensitive to what they perceive as the politicisation of humanitarian or development programmes. Sustaining peace may be perceived as inherently political by crisis-affected governments, and AFP activities to support sustaining peace objectives may be seen as a challenge to their authority.

Conclusion

Achieving and sustaining peace in any given context is a hugely ambitious task, requiring clear and concerted leadership and action from the state and other national and local actors. Without this national ownership, even

the full force of the UN system will not be enough. The UN system can, however, be a catalyst for peace: it can facilitate dialogue and encourage national, local and international actors to work together in taking the necessary positive steps to prevent conflict and mitigate its effects, and promote long-term peace and development.

AFPs have an absolutely critical role to play in this regard. They have a unique array of technical and operational capacities that can, and to an extent already are, directed at addressing the causes, drivers and triggers of conflict and violence, and supporting states and their citizens in their search for peace and sustainable development. But these capacities are not currently being maximised; their comparative advantages as individual agencies are not being fully exploited; and their collective potential is undermined by competition over funding, lack of authoritative leadership at country level, and the absence of a shared understanding of and commitment to sustaining peace.

Addressing this will require concerted efforts by individual AFPs across the spectrum. Each will need to articulate their institutional contribution to sustaining peace, within the scope of their mandates, operations and available resources, both internally to staff and to external stakeholders. They will need to set agency agendas aside and work together in a truly collaborative manner, pooling resources in an effort to achieve shared outcomes on sustaining peace. Partnerships with national and local actors – government and civil society – will need to be at the heart of this work. To achieve their full potential they will also need clearer guidance from senior managers on what sustaining peace means in operational terms; stronger, more authoritative leadership both at headquarters and in country offices; enhanced partnerships with other components of the UN system, including Secretariat entities and the World Bank; and, perhaps most importantly, political, financial and operational support from Member States, particularly donors and affected states.

Recommended actions

The strategic goals, objectives and corresponding actions and principles set out below aim to address the specific actions needed to enhance the capacities of AFPs to sustain

peace. They should be understood as additional to the multiple, ongoing reform efforts seeking to address macro-level, structural challenges in the UN system.

Strategic Goal	Objective	Actions and Principles
<p><i>The UN system, including AFPs, have a shared operational understanding of sustaining peace.</i></p>	<p>A system-wide operational understanding or definition of sustaining peace – setting out in concrete terms what, why and how the UN can contribute to sustaining peace – is adopted and rolled out to all staff at all levels.</p>	<p>This operational definition should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on the concept defined by Member States and the AGE. • Based on an understanding of the UN’s comparative advantage vis-à-vis other international and national actors. • Informed by all levels and relevant UN entities, but particularly by leaders and staff at country level. • Clearly and consistently articulated by UN leaders from SG down through global heads of AFPs and other entities, and field leaders (SRSGs, RC/HCs, Country Office heads). • Integrated into mandatory system-wide training on the concept of sustaining peace, policy guidance and job profiles relating to sustaining peace. • Integrated in recruitment and performance management systems for UN leaders in positions relevant to sustaining peace. • Translated into country-specific strategies (including ISFs, UNDAFs other country strategies). • Endorsed by Executive Boards of AFPs and supported by Member States.
<p><i>AFPs have embedded this shared understanding and commitment at institutional level, adjusting existing priorities and resources to maximise the contribution that they can make to sustaining peace.</i></p>	<p>AFPs have clearly outlined their role in sustaining peace, within the scope of their mandate, and communicated this to all staff and partners.</p>	<p>This institutional role should be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Derived from the system-wide operational definition. • Clearly outlined in a stand-alone institutional strategy and/or integrated into existing corporate strategies and policies. • Communicated to all staff and partners. <p>A corresponding action plan should be developed to articulate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which areas of programming or operations are relevant to sustaining peace. • How existing resources can be adjusted to maximise AFPs’ contribution to this goal (including funding, institutional knowledge/learning, guidance and other tools). • Where key gaps in necessary resources are, and how they may reasonably be addressed (with a focus on drawing on resources within the UN system), including through training and additional guidance and tools. <p>Implementation of the action plan should be monitored and evaluated (preferably independently), with adjustments made as necessary.</p>
<p><i>Partnerships are placed at the heart of how AFPs understand and seek to address needs relating to sustaining peace.</i></p>	<p>Strategic engagement with national and local actors should be enhanced to inform AFPs’ contextual understanding and ensure that strategies are better aligned with and more responsive to national/local aspirations for peace.</p>	<p>At country level, AFPs individually and UNCTs as a collective should review their engagement with national and local actors, particularly parliamentary and sub-national authorities, communities, civil society, academia and the private sector, to ensure that partnerships result in more informed and responsive programming on sustaining peace.</p> <p>Engagement with local actors, particularly affected communities, should be prioritised and measures taken to facilitate this, including increased deep field presence and greater respect for the local knowledge of national staff.</p> <p>Practical guidance and political support will be required from AFP HQs to country offices in managing these partnerships in a neutral and effective manner.</p>
<p><i>AFPs’ individual and joint programmes are more conflict-sensitive and better designed to positively impact on, or directly achieve, sustaining peace objectives.</i></p>	<p>Individual and collective capacities for context, conflict and political economy analysis are augmented, ensuring greater understanding of sustaining peace needs and the potential impact of AFPs and the UN in the national/local context.</p>	<p>Context, conflict and political economy analysis should be informed by (and, where appropriate, shared with) national and international actors, including government, civil society, academia and the World Bank/IFIs. Analysis of contextual dynamics, and the risks to and opportunities for sustaining peace, should be a continuous process.</p>

Strategic Goal	Objective	Actions and Principles
		<p>At institutional level, AFPs should audit their existing capacities for analysis (context, conflict, political economy) to identify gaps and how they may be addressed, primarily within existing resources (e.g. knowledge and skills transfers, guidance and training). Investment in analytical capacities must be long-term, with specific tools and dedicated staff.</p> <p>At HQ level, AFPs and Secretariat departments should collectively audit analytical capacities across the system to determine opportunities for pooling or updating them, and aligning them with the analytical capacity of partners, including academic institutions, specialised INGOs and the World Bank/IMF.</p> <p>At country level, capacities for integrating analysis in programme design and implementation should be pooled and upgraded/supported through deployment of skilled PDAs and/or training or support from specialised NGOs or academia. In non-mission settings, this may consist of secondments from UNCT members, and should be tasked by and report to the UNCT/RC. The PDA roster should be expanded to ensure that RCs have access to this capacity. In mission settings, mechanisms for sharing analysis between the mission and the UNCT should be created and, if relevant, staff from the UNCT seconded into the JMAC (or other mission analysis cell).</p>
	Individual and collective capacities for integrating analysis into programme design and implementation are augmented. This should aim to ensure that general programmes at a minimum do not undermine sustaining peace objectives, and capacities specifically to support these objectives are enhanced.	At country level, the remits/skills-sets of PDAs and the sharing of individual AFP capacities should be expanded. Support, including training, from specialised NGOs or academia may be useful.
<i>AFPs work more collaboratively together and with relevant Secretariat entities, with more joined-up and/or joint programming and activities.</i>	UNCTs, together with relevant Secretariat entities, should develop common/joint strategies aimed at achieving sustaining peace objectives. These should be based on national needs/priorities and an understanding of the comparative advantages and capacities of AFPs and other UN entities relating to sustaining peace.	At country level, joint strategies for sustaining peace (stand-alone or part of UNDAFs, ISFs or other strategic documents) should be formulated in accordance with national/local priorities. They should be based on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shared understanding of the context and sustaining peace needs. • A set of shared outcomes to be achieved. • Formulation of programmes and activities that aim to achieve these outcomes, with responsibilities for implementation (and resources) assigned based on an understanding of the comparative advantages of different AFPs. • Shared learning of successful approaches in the given context. • Shared monitoring and evaluation of implementation, with adjustments in strategy and programme approaches in response to changes in context.
	HQ-level coordination and collaboration around global and country-specific sustaining peace objectives is increased, utilising existing mechanisms and fora.	Streamline existing mechanisms for coordination by ensuring that they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusive to actors with a specific contribution to make on sustaining peace. • Decision-oriented, rather than information-sharing. • Supportive of operations in the field, including decisions around surge capacities to support analysis and programme design, and addressing country-level inter-agency challenges. <p>Ensure that the new Sustainable Development-Sustaining Peace Results Group is given the authority and capacity to support global and, particularly, country-level roll-out of this agenda.</p> <p>Building on the findings of this review, undertake a detailed audit of AFP (and UN-wide) capacities in key thematic areas directly relating to conflict and violence to identify and address gaps and duplications and highlight areas for change.</p>
	Increased opportunities for joint or joined-up programming are harnessed to maximise the impact of technical and other capacities.	Building on recommendations in the SG's report on repositioning the development system, creative models for joined-up programmes should be explored – such as programmes designed around a single AFP lead, and supporting individual implementation of sub-programmes by AFPs. <p>Building on the Global Focal Point system, explore opportunities for increased sharing of resources and strategising in key thematic areas between AFPs and relevant Secretariat entities.</p>

Strategic Goal	Objective	Actions and Principles
		<p>Secondments of staff between AFPs, and between AFPs and Secretariat entities, should be increased to enhance knowledge sharing and learning and encourage more joined-up programming on sustaining peace.</p>
<p><i>Changes in culture and practice are incentivised at individual and institutional level.</i></p>	<p>Recruitment, assignment and retention of staff with specific skills and knowledge relevant to sustaining peace in priority countries is enhanced.</p>	<p>This may require:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating sustaining peace-related skills and responsibilities in specific job and leadership profiles and terms of reference for relevant positions at HQ and in country operations. Enhancing HR policies involving remuneration and benefits for field assignments in fragile contexts. Creating clear pathways and increasing career rewards to encourage staff mobility across AFPs and Secretariat entities.
	<p>Existing performance management systems for AFP staff are reviewed to ensure institution-wide accountability for delivering on sustaining peace objectives and to reward excellence.</p>	<p>USG compacts with the SG should include specific markers for measuring sustaining peace-related achievements, including leadership of this agenda and encouraging collaborative working between institutions.</p> <p>AFPs' performance management systems should include specific markers for measuring sustaining peace-related achievements for all relevant staff positions, but particularly management. Markers should be derived from the institutional vision/action plan for sustaining peace and, for AFP country office heads in particular, assessed through 360-degree feedback, including from RCs and partner AFPs/Secretariat entities.</p> <p>Accountability for sustaining peace objectives should be accompanied by increased tolerance of risk, including sharing of learning from failures or mistakes.</p>
	<p>Common or pooled funds for sustaining peace-related programmes are expanded to enable more strategic coordination and sharing of analysis and learning and stronger incentives for setting common priorities and joined-up programme implementation.</p>	<p>Funding allocated specifically to a country (beyond AFPs' own core resources) should be consolidated into a single multi-partner trust fund. This should be managed by the RC, who would also be responsible for fund-raising, and allocated in accordance with UN-wide strategic objectives relating to sustaining peace. Programmes should be subject to regular oversight and learning disseminated to UNCT members, and decisions to scale-up, restructure or terminate activities should be taken based on changes in context or evaluation of impact.</p> <p>HQ funds for peace-related activities should be reviewed, and if necessary consolidated, to provide catalytic and timely support, particularly for activities related to conflict prevention and early engagement in a country. Cooperation with the World Bank on financing arrangements in high-risk fragile contexts should be deepened.</p> <p>Dialogue with Member States that provide the most voluntary financing should determine what changes in the governance, management and administrative capacity of UN pooled funds would enable them to commit to predictable, longer-term funding for sustaining peace. This could be done in pilot countries where the UN intends to scale-up its sustaining peace activities or globally, possibly with a view to developing compacts with measurable mutual obligations.</p>
<p><i>The RC system's capacities are enhanced to facilitate leadership and successful delivery of UN strategies for sustaining peace.</i></p>	<p>RCs are specifically recruited for, more clearly tasked with and better able to deliver on UNCTs' responsibilities around sustaining peace.</p>	<p>Beyond the structural and other changes outlined by the SG in his report on repositioning the development system, there are a number of actions that would help build the capacities of RCs specifically for sustaining peace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The personal and professional skills required to successfully lead sustaining peace-related strategies should be included in the recruitment, tasking and performance management processes for RCs. Targeted training, guidance and mentoring (particularly of new RCs) may help them manage relationships with national and international actors in relation to sustaining peace. RCs should have increased access to staffing capacities, including an expanded roster of PDAs or staff with analytical and programmatic design skills, and for communications and operational coordination. RCs should be given greater authority for mobilising and managing country-specific common funding specifically designed to support more joined-up sustaining peace programmes by UNCTs.

Introduction

The United Nations and its Member States face an array of extraordinarily complex and interrelated challenges to global peace and security. Multiple large-scale protracted conflicts are causing severe human suffering, including mass displacement across national and regional boundaries, and the proliferation of armed groups in these conflicts poses serious transnational security threats. At the same time, the international community's response to these challenges is becoming increasingly fragmented. In countries not affected by violent conflict, entrenched inequalities in wealth, income, access to natural resources, education, livelihoods, basic services and political representation are holding back development progress and increasing fragility and the risk of conflict. In the face of these multiple challenges, the UN system is coming under perhaps more scrutiny than ever before. Member States and other stakeholders – including the UN Secretary-General himself – are placing repeated emphasis on the need for a more effective and cost-efficient organisation that can deliver against the goals of the UN Charter.

It is in this context that the 'sustaining peace' agenda has emerged. The term was introduced by the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE) conducting the 2015 review of the UN peacebuilding architecture (UN, 2015d), and has since been adopted and elucidated by UN Member States through General Assembly (UNGA) and Security Council (UNSC) resolutions (specifically S/RES/2282 and A/RES/70/262) in 2016. In these resolutions, Member States explicitly tasked the wider UN system to come together to ensure a more 'coordinated, coherent and integrated' effort aimed at supporting national actors to sustain peace (UNSC, 2016c).

AFPs are at the forefront of the UN's efforts to help affected states and their citizens prevent conflict, mitigate its impact and transition from conflict to long-term peace, stability and equitable and sustainable development. But this is a tall order: AFPs' country-level operational activities are, by and large, funded primarily by voluntary contributions from Member States (around 80% of the financial resources of all AFPs), with demand increasingly outstripping available resources; as international aid actors, their presence in an affected state is time-limited; and they have little political or financial leverage over an

Box 1: UN agencies, funds and programmes

With a wide variety of histories, mandates, structures and budgetary processes, AFPs work across the UN's three pillars of human rights, peace and security and sustainable development, including humanitarian response. Funds and programmes are self-governed and financed mainly through voluntary rather than assessed contributions by Member States. They are charged with operational activities at country level, i.e. policy advice and technical support for governments and project implementation. The UN's specialised agencies are autonomous bodies created through international agreements. Linked to the UN through cooperative arrangements, they have a mandate for global norm- and standard-setting. They are funded by assessed contributions from Member States, though many also receive voluntary contributions and spend significant amounts of money at country level for operational activities. They have their own membership and governing structure and do not receive binding directives from the General Assembly or the Secretary-General (Fues et al., 2007; Jolly and Askwith, 2016). The AFPs included in this review are listed in Annex 7.

affected state or de facto authorities. There is anecdotal evidence that AFPs are also being increasingly bypassed by donor countries, which are instead turning for aid delivery to large-scale vertical funds, private programmes, partnerships and foundations that they consider less bureaucratic, more responsive to their clients and more efficient.¹ In light of the current geopolitical context, the nature of the threats the UN is trying to address, and donors' increasing emphasis on efficiency, value and results, it is the opinion of the review team that some AFPs may not continue to exist in the same form in the years ahead unless they adapt and reform.

It is in this context that the UN Working Group on Transitions (WGT)² of the UN Development Group (UNDG) commissioned the Overseas Development

1 Writing on the rise of vertical funds in health and education, former Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has commented that 'The international community has begun to march away from the UN with both its funds and its feet in this area of traditional UN delivery' (Rudd, 2016).

2 The WGT has now been subsumed into the newly created Sustainable Development-Sustaining Peace Results Group.

Institute (ODI) to undertake this review. The review is part of the follow-up to a commitment by the former Secretary-General in his report to the UNGA on the future of UN peace operations (A/70/357-S/2015/682, 2 September 2015, para. 42), in which he endorsed the corresponding recommendations in the reports of both the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) and the AGE on the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture.

Objectives and scope of the review

The purpose of this review, as articulated by the WGT, is to prepare recommendations on how the capacities of UN AFPs could be strengthened in order to sustain peace. It focuses on what is required to sustain peace, and on AFPs' present capacities at country level to deliver on the UN's mandate to support national actors in sustaining peace. It reviews the capacities of AFPs at headquarters in so far as they are utilised in support of country-level operations in relation to sustaining peace. The review team was not asked to assess the mandates of AFPs with respect to their role in sustaining peace, nor was it directed to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of programmes aimed at sustaining peace (see TORs in Annex 6).

Methodology

The analytical approach was primarily qualitative, with consideration of quantitative data where available. The research involved a review of existing literature relating to the capacities of AFPs for sustaining peace, including internal documentation shared by AFPs (see Annex 10 for a full bibliography); semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders within and outside the UN system, at headquarters and at country level; and an online survey of UN and non-UN stakeholders, including all the AFPs covered in this review, Secretariat departments, senior UN officials, specialised international NGOs and independent experts. In all, over 300 individuals were interviewed by the research team at HQ and in the country case studies,

including staff from AFPs, other UN entities, INGOs/civil society and donors (see Table 1). These interviews were guided by a set of questions (see Annex 8 for the list of interview questions). A total of 287 online surveys were completed, including by staff from 30 different UN entities (including two inter-agency focal points). The rate of returns in the survey was uneven, ranging from one or two respondents from some AFPs (e.g. UNEP, UNHCR, UNMAS, UNODC, UNRWA), up to 29 for UN Women, 30 for WFP, 32 for UNOPS and 56 for UNFPA. Thus, in some cases the statistical significance of the sample was affected (see Annex 9 for a copy of the survey).

The research team conducted four field case studies, selected by the WGT, in Colombia, Liberia, Kyrgyzstan and Lebanon, as well as a desk review of the Philippines (summaries of these case studies are presented in Annexes 1–5). The case studies were selected by the WGT based on the following criteria: 1) mission and non-mission settings; 2) regional diversity; 3) longevity of the conflict and the UN intervention; and 4) diversity of approaches to preventing or mitigating conflict, or addressing root causes of conflicts. Lebanon replaced Somalia, which had been originally selected but had to be abandoned mid-way as a result of the pre-famine emergency, elections and a number of other competing priorities for the UN Country Team (UNCT). A draft of this report was reviewed by the WGT, and their comments were taken into consideration in this final version.

Definitions

This review refers to the definition of sustaining peace set out in General Assembly and Security Council Resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282, namely:

sustaining peace ... should be broadly understood as both a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root

Table 1: Stakeholder interviews conducted (number of individuals)

Location	AFP	Other UN (e.g. Secretariat departments and World Bank)	Non-UN (e.g. civil society, donors, national authorities, independent experts)	Total
HQ	71	5	6	82
Colombia	20	7	22	49
Kyrgyzstan	23	4	15	42
Lebanon	22	15	25	62
Liberia	28	18	30	76
Philippines	10	3	2	15
				326

causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and...

sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the Government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations engagement at all stages of conflict, and in all its dimensions, and needs sustained international attention and assistance.

Following organisational theory,³ the research team defined capacity as having four broad dimensions:

- *Vision and leadership*: institutional vision, strategies and policies.
- *Programming*: analytical capacities and capacities for implementation and monitoring and evaluation.
- *Resources*: human resources (in-house and external skills and expertise), financial resources (bilateral and pooled funds, regular and extra-budgetary/voluntary funding); tools (institutional and system-wide guidance and tools).
- *Partnerships*: within AFPs/UNCTs; with other parts of the UN system (i.e. Secretariat departments and offices); with national actors (government and civil society); and with other international bodies (World Bank/inter-

national financial institutions (IFIs) and specialised INGOs).

A number of challenges were encountered in the course of the research. First, the research team was asked to review, not to assess or evaluate, capacities, and the consequent methodology allowed only for a broad consideration of capacities based largely on self-reporting and qualitative interviews, rather than a detailed audit of capacities or an evaluation of how they are deployed and to what effect. Second, the lack of operational clarity and consensus on 'sustaining peace' made it difficult to determine exactly what capacities are deployed in relation to achieving this goal. Third, the review was commissioned in the very early stages of the roll-out of this agenda, and as such its ability to fully consider what capacities are used and deployed for sustaining peace purposes was limited. Fourth, in practical terms the timeline and resources for the study did not allow for an individual review of each AFP's institutional capacities. Consequently, the research team has focused primarily on areas of convergence and divergence across the broad spectrum of AFPs, highlighting common strengths and weaknesses.

The present report outlines the evolution of the sustaining peace agenda, before briefly discussing conflict trends and the type of capacities that may be required to address them. It then goes on to outline capacities across the spectrum of AFPs in relation to leadership and vision, programming, resources and partnerships. Finally, it presents a series of conclusions and ways forward.

3 Organisational theory was developed in the 1970s and 1980s to give guidance on what constitutes effective capacity in achieving the objectives of an organisation.

1. Sustaining peace: the UN's challenge

1.1. The UN's role in global peace and security

The UN Charter focuses on uniting nations around efforts to protect human rights, foster social and economic development and, perhaps most importantly, prevent armed conflict and maintain international peace and security. In the more than seven decades since the UN's creation, threats to national and international peace and security have evolved significantly, becoming primarily intra-state, more asymmetric and more urbanised (Bennett et al., 2016). The nature of conflict parties has changed, with a proliferation of armed groups espousing national, regional and even international agendas, and the highly polarised geopolitical environment is increasingly reminiscent of the Cold War. Political violence intended to strike fear into the civilian population is on the rise, and millions of civilians are subject to levels of violence and abuse that the world had hoped never to see again. Clearly, the UN system, and the international community at large, is failing in its goal of saving 'succeeding generations from the scourge of war'.

In recognising this, the UN system has repeatedly sought to evaluate and strengthen its efforts to prevent conflict, mitigate its impact and support conflict-affected nations and people to achieve long-term peace and security. The 1992 Agenda for Peace and 1995 Supplement to an Agenda for Peace; the 2000 Panel on UN Peace Operations (the Brahimi Report); the 2005 In Larger Freedom report; and the 2010 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture all highlighted the enormous challenges faced by the UN system in fulfilling its role in regard to international peace and security, including in terms of the geopolitical environment in which the UN system operates, and in relation to its own capacities and resources.

In 2015, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the UN, there was a renewed focus on understanding the nature of its role in tackling armed conflict and crises, and how to address its weaknesses and maximise its strengths in this respect. The Global Study on the Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the High Level Panel on Peace Operations and the report of the AGE on the UN peacebuilding architecture collectively highlighted a number of key challenges facing the UN system today, as summarised by Boutellis and Ó Súilleabháin (2016):

- *Sustaining peace and prevention*: preventing conflict from occurring or recurring should be the primary goal of the UN system, and UNCTs and their member AFPs can play a significant role in this regard, specifically in 'helping Member States deliver on their commitment to sustaining peace as a function of inclusive governance and equitable development' (*ibid.*: 5). This includes joint conflict analysis that is not limited to security threats but takes a more holistic, developmental approach, and maps not only the causes of violence but also peaceful actors (*ibid.*).
- *Gender equality and women's participation*: women's participation is 'critical to the success of peace programs, the durability of peace and political change, and equality' (*ibid.*: 6). The UN system must ensure that it both demonstrates its own commitment to equality (including in staffing and budgetary allocations), and supports Member States in meeting their commitments.
- *Collaborative and strategic partnerships*: the UN system cannot achieve sustaining peace alone, but it can use its position to 'facilitate' internal and external partnerships 'that lead to more coherent international action in support of inclusive national and local peace, reconciliation, and reconstruction initiatives' (*ibid.*: 7).
- *People-centred approaches*: ensuring inclusive engagement, involving women, men, youth, the elderly and minorities, is an integral part of sustaining peace strategies and is 'one of the fundamental shifts the organisation must undertake to make its field missions fit for purpose' (*ibid.*: 8).

These reviews, and the high-level political debates they have generated and informed in the UNSC, UNGA and within the UN system itself, have created growing momentum for major change (ECOSOC, 2016; Cliffe and Novosseloff, 2017). This momentum is beginning to manifest itself in multiple ongoing reform 'streams', including 'Human Rights Up Front'; the implementation of recommendations from the HIPPO report; the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and its Commitments to Action; revisions to the development system through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda (including the SG's recent report on repositioning the UN development system

to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: Ensuring a Better Future for All (UNSG, 2017a)); the Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies initiative: Call to Action (2017); revisions to the UN's peace and security architecture; management reform; reforms to ensure gender parity; and new counter-terrorism coordination.

1.2. The concept of 'sustaining peace'

The 2015 reviews articulated this need for far-reaching change as part of a new framework for 'sustaining peace'. As defined by the UNSC and UNGA, the concept espouses a whole-of-system approach that incorporates peacebuilding, peacekeeping and political mediation as well as, perhaps more explicitly than ever before, sustainable development (though economic and social components had already been recognised as peacebuilding priorities in the 2009 report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding (A/63/881-S/2009/304) and in the Terms of Reference of the Peace Building Fund negotiated in the GA). 'Sustaining peace' expands on traditional 'peacebuilding' in terms of its substantive scope, its timeframe and its ambitions, including addressing the indirect and enabling factors that give rise to and sustain conflict and violence. It encompasses efforts to prevent violence and armed conflict from occurring, to mitigate their impact where they do occur and to work with states and their citizens to build long-term peace and stability. It is envisioned both as an 'arc' leading from prevention, through peace processes to post-conflict recovery, reconciliation and reconstruction, and as an 'unbroken thread' running through all of the UN's work (UN, 2015a: 3, 21). The concept pushes peacebuilding beyond the technical, narrow focus on project-based activities in post-conflict situations to which it had increasingly been confined, and recognises that sustaining peace applies to all phases: prior to the outbreak; during the conflict; and after it has abated (Mahmoud and Ó Súilleabháin, 2016). Peace is therefore understood as a long-term process of social change that requires the engagement of every UN agency and mission, alongside tools including joint analysis and planning. As articulated by Boutellis and Ó Súilleabháin (2016: 5), this means 'breaking out of sectoral approaches to peace and conflict and better integrating the UN's three foundational pillars (peace and security, development and human rights) and their respective governance structures'. It may ultimately be understood as a transformational agenda that combines a call for enhanced technical and operational approaches with high-level political commitment to prevent conflict from occurring or recurring.

1.3. Sustaining peace: from concept to operations

As highlighted by a majority of stakeholders in this review, the current definition of sustaining peace presents both opportunities and a number of challenges to

Box 2: Defining 'sustaining peace'

'Sustaining peace', as a concept, is defined in UNGA and UNSC resolutions A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282. The AGE report sets out some operational principles including contextual understanding of peacebuilding and conflict prevention; ensuring that sustaining peace informs all UN engagements before, during and after conflict; a coherent approach to conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping, post-conflict recovery and reconstruction and development; using sustaining peace as an organising principle that unites the peace and security, human rights and development pillars of the UN; national ownership of sustaining peace and the activities that support it; and realistic and long-term timelines, since sustaining peace after a conflict is a lengthy and costly task. In its guidance note, elaborated in consultation with AFPs and relevant Secretariat entities, the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) explains that sustaining peace is 'a more practice-oriented comprehensive concept to prevent violent conflict' (PBSO, 2017: 1). It outlines seven steps for the UN system, based on the two resolutions, namely: ensuring that sustaining peace is recognised as a joint responsibility across the UN system ('mindset'); ensuring a joint understanding of causes, drivers and triggers of conflict ('joint analysis'); formulating a shared vision and common outcomes; joint strategic planning utilising the comparative advantages of different UN entities; implementing activities and programmes that are designed or aimed specifically at sustaining peace or that can contribute to sustaining peace; instituting relevant partnerships and ensuring predictable financing; and ensuring appropriate evaluations and sharing of learning (*ibid.*: 6).

implementation. For many, the concept as articulated by Member States is currently too diffuse and vague, enabling almost any activity by a UN entity to be considered as part of this approach. However, there was also a consensus that, in as much as the concept aims to get the UN 'back to basics', i.e. to the core peace and security mandate as articulated in the UN Charter, it is an important normative development. There is certainly appreciation that, in encompassing a much wider set of interventions, it offers scope for a more system-wide, holistic approach from the UN and its constituent parts to the challenge of achieving 'peace'. However, there was also concern among the majority of stakeholders in this review that sustaining peace is currently still very much a concept and that, in the absence of a clearer and more detailed *operational* definition, it risks becoming a slogan rather than a practical approach or new way of working. There

is also concern that the concept has been developed as a top-down policy, created by Member States and the highest echelons of the UN management, and has yet to be grounded in the knowledge and experience of the UN's staff and field operations.

1.4. Sustaining peace: a system-wide responsibility?

Much of the conceptual discussions to date focus on sustaining peace as a system-wide endeavour in which all parts of the UN system have a role to play. However, research for this review indicates that interpreting sustaining peace as a wholly comprehensive approach does not necessarily sit well with some humanitarian agencies or actors within the UN system. Indeed, some AFPs see tensions between sustaining peace as an inherently political endeavour and the humanitarian principles of impartiality and neutrality. Some stakeholders felt that the agenda may constitute a risk to the humanitarian work of AFPs in the most complex conflict situations. Others, however, felt that 'business as usual', in which humanitarian action is effectively separated from political intervention, is not an option. As with the UN policy on 'integration' for multi-dimensional peace support missions, there must be a concerted effort to understand and mitigate these tensions and adapt to working in a way that both upholds humanitarian principles and supports objectives aimed at the resolution of the conflicts that generate humanitarian need (Metcalf et al, 2011). Ensuring shared or joint processes of conflict analysis and developing a shared understanding of risk, vulnerability and resilience between humanitarian, development, peace, human rights and other parts of the UN system, taking into account the specificity of each country context, will be crucial in this regard.

1.5. Sustaining peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Member States have clearly articulated that the SDGs and the sustaining peace agendas are mutually reinforcing.

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the Peacebuilding Commission, meeting in 2016, asserted that 'sustaining peace and strong institutions were critical for achieving all the goals, and, in turn, the entire 2030 agenda can contribute to sustaining peace – before, during and after conflict' (ECOSOC and PBC, 2016). The UNGA, meeting in a High Level Dialogue on 'Building Sustainable Peace For All: Synergies between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustaining Peace', further highlighted key areas where the two converge, including: 'the importance of inclusivity and a people-centred approach'; 'the centrality of national and inclusive ownership'; and the need for 'strategic partnerships' that bring together actors 'from across governments, the UN system, regional organizations, civil society, the international financial institutions and the private sector' to ensure their work is 'coordinated, complementary and mutually reinforcing' (UNGA, 2017).

The substantive or programmatic links between these two agendas go beyond SDG 16 (peace, justice and stronger institutions). As outlined by PBSO, many of the SDG targets 'are directly related to violence, justice or inclusivity', and a number of SDGs, including 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), 14 (life below water) and 15 (life on land) are also critical to addressing the root causes or drivers of conflict (PBSO, 2017). As argued by Mahmoud and Ó Súilleabháin (2016), positive peace is both an outcome and an enabler of sustainable development, and the effective implementation of all 17 SDGs and their targets can be used as a vehicle for building sustainable peace. These synergies also offer important opportunities for supporting the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda: the SDGs can help outline a more operational or programmatic approach for AFPs to understand and articulate their role in sustaining peace; and linking the SDGs with the sustaining peace agenda may prove helpful in addressing the political sensitivities that some Member States will undoubtedly feel in relation to applying the concept to their own national contexts.

2. Conflict trends and addressing the root causes of conflict

2.1. Conflict causes, drivers and triggers

The nature and conduct of conflict has changed significantly since the end of the Cold War. Conflicts have become more complex and intractable, and their drivers more fragmented; some of the drivers underpinning past conflict – communism, nationalism, separatism – have lost much of their power, while others, notably insurgent groups that exploit religious and local identities and differences, have been re-energised (UN, 2015a). Today's conflicts are driven as much by identity as by grand geopolitics, and are conducted as much within communities and cities as on the frontlines of 'classic', organised warfare (Bennett et al., 2016). Militant non-state armed actors such as Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and Islamic State control territories in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, and are 'bound together, not by citizenship, but through transnational grassroots networks of kin, tribe and religious ideology' (*ibid.*). Meanwhile, forms of violence not typically defined as conflict in the formal sense are taking lives on a staggering scale. In Central America, for instance, the guerrilla insurgencies of the Cold War period have given way to endemic drug-related violence. Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador have per capita homicide rates eight times higher than the global average, and several times higher than those registered in many conflicts. 'Forced displacement of entire communities, sexual violence against women and girls, widespread child recruitment, lack of access to life-saving medical care and basic education, attacks on the medical mission: these and other known consequences of war are found here as well' (Cue and Núñez-Flores, 2017). Today's conflicts are also increasingly regionalised, as fighting in one country affects neighbouring ones, either through direct intervention, as in Cameroon, or in the form of mass displacement, as in Turkey, Lebanon and other states currently home to millions of Syrian refugees. Domestic armed groups are

utilising global communications tools to link and share extremist ideologies and violent agendas within and across regions, as well as benefiting from the funding generated from international organised crime (OECD, 2016b).⁴

Contemporary conflicts have multiple, overlapping root causes, drivers and triggers, which shift and change over time. In its report *States of Fragility 2016: Understanding Violence* (OECD, 2016), the OECD elaborates five dimensions of fragility that help summarise the root causes, drivers and triggers of violence and armed conflict, namely economic, environmental, political, security and societal. These reflect a general view that the causes of conflict include inadequate national leadership and governance, with fragile, and in some cases entirely absent, institutions characterised by poor management, corruption, the suppression of dissent, politicised security forces, tolerance of impunity and uneven application of the law; a politics that excludes particular groups along ethnic, religious or tribal lines, with minorities 'oppressed, scapegoated or violently targeted' (UN, 2015d); and economic and social deprivation, feeding grievances among have-nots excluded from a viable livelihood and the means to support their families. Competition over natural resources is another major factor: according to the UN, since 1990 tensions over natural resources – notably land and water – have been prominent factors in at least 18 conflicts (UN 2015a). In the Horn of Africa, tensions between pastoralists and sedentary communities, and between customary systems of land rights and ownership and 'formal' cadastral practices, have long been a significant driver of conflict, in conjunction with environmental stresses and resource scarcity.

2.2. Addressing conflict causes, drivers and triggers

Depending on the country situation, the type of instrument and the way in which it is deployed, international aid

4 For more background information on conflict trends, see Dupuy et al. (2017).

Table 2: How AFP instruments can affect political settlements

	Incumbent authority	Challenger to authority
Diffusion of ideas and knowledge	Adaptation: e.g. ideas from abroad on governance make government more effective and strengthen incumbents	Contestation: e.g. promotion of consultation with civil society, gender, or insistence on livelihood restoration when land is acquired through eminent domain. Strengthens those with limited power.
Certification by external actors	Legitimation: visible international backing of government, e.g. through budget support, high levels of aid to government	Delegitimation: e.g. by withholding aid if government does not follow donor agendas, or sometimes inadvertently bypassing government through parallel implementation channels. Community-driven development approaches.
Brokerage: facilitating bargaining or trust-building among actors	Consolidation: facilitating solutions to collective action problems, e.g. by 'Doing Development Differently'; facilitating private investment that develops natural resources or which generates growth that strengthens the performance legitimacy of governments.	Disruption: brokering relationships outside government or which challenge it, e.g. direct support to NGOs, promotion of budget transparency. CDD.

Source: Based on Yanguas, P. (2017).

programmes can support or weaken incumbent authority (e.g. the government) or its challengers (Yanguas, 2017). Mechanisms for how international aid actors might influence the political settlement that affects sustaining peace include diffusion of knowledge and ideas (e.g. human rights, gender-sensitive development or more technical knowledge); the legitimisation (or delegitimation) of parties depending on their recognition by and relations with international aid actors; and the ability of aid actors to broker among local actors (e.g. to empower communities, mobilise the poor and excluded, and to bridge citizens and state) (see Table 2).

The literature shows that building capable country institutions is the key to the transition to resilience and the prevention of civil conflict, and that the process of institution-building must be home-grown, adapted to the local context, is non-linear and takes decades (North et al., 2013; Fukuyama, 2011; Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012; World Bank, 2011; Pritchett et al., 2012). External actors need to be more facilitators than providers of models, and should seek to influence collective action and the resolution of problems that constrain development and public confidence in institutions (Andrews et al., 2012; Booth, 2012; Williamson, 2015). Establishing parallel channels for delivery has the potential to undermine national delivery mechanisms, not least by attracting the best national staff and taking away opportunities for national organisations to learn by doing. This is not to say that parallel channels are always inappropriate, but it does suggest that international aid actors need a better

understanding of the deeper consequences of this type of programming. There is also perhaps a need to critically examine in each context the assumption that supporting national or local authorities' service delivery, both in terms of meeting people's basic needs and in terms of shoring up the role and function of the authorities, genuinely contributes to a state's legitimacy and authority in the eyes of its people. Recent evidence (Nixon and Mallett, 2017) suggests that service delivery is only one factor shaping people's perceptions of their government and, in the case studies for this review, was rarely the most important.⁵

2.3. AFPs' potential in addressing the root causes of conflict

This review was not asked to evaluate the degree to which programmes implemented by AFPs were directly relevant to or had an impact on sustaining peace objectives. However, in general terms the research suggests that many of the mainstream activities of AFPs can and do contribute to sustaining peace. First, their presence as international actors in a fragile or conflict-affected context can potentially be a signal of positive investment by the international community. Second, many AFPs are undertaking programmes which could or already do intentionally contribute to sustaining peace objectives. Third, as outlined by the UNGA, there is a clear link between achieving the SDG targets, which AFPs are already tasked with, and the sustaining peace agenda. Fourth, AFPs and Secretariat partners can support areas

5 By contrast, AFPs and other stakeholders frequently told the study that providing support to national or local authorities' service delivery – a key programmatic area for many AFPs – constitutes a significant contribution to sustaining peace.

that governments of countries affected by fragility regard as important for sustaining peace, such as inclusive political settlements, people's security, justice, employment and livelihoods, and capacity for accountable and fair service delivery.⁶

Taken together, it is clear that AFPs have a unique array of technical and thematic capacities that are relevant to the causes, drivers and triggers of conflict outlined above, and which also cut across the SDGs that are pertinent to sustaining peace. This includes technical expertise in managing and facilitating access to natural resources, including land and water (e.g. UN-Habitat, UNEP); promoting/integrating good governance and democratic values, including the political inclusion of women, minorities and youth (e.g. UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA); supporting the establishment of national rights frameworks, including in thematic areas such as health and education (e.g. UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, UNHCR); building national capacities for security, rule of law and access to justice (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF, UNODC); building and sustaining national and local capacities for the peaceful settlement of disputes, including before they lead to violence (e.g. UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women); supporting access to livelihoods and economic opportunities (e.g. ILO, FAO, WFP, UNDP); promoting the free flow of information and an independent media (e.g. UNESCO); rehabilitation of critical infrastructure (e.g. UNOPS); building capacities for de-mining and raising awareness of mine/UXO risks (e.g. UNMAS, UNICEF); and the provision of or support for basic services (e.g. UNICEF, WHO, WFP, UNHCR, UNRWA). Beyond their substantive responsibilities, AFPs can also play an important role in the UN's wider efforts to support states and their citizens to sustain peace. AFPs are, by and large, the longest-standing UN actors in a country, and they work with an array of national and international actors in the delivery of their programmes. As UN entities, they also uphold and promote the universal values of the international human rights framework.

AFPs' actual or potential contribution to sustaining peace is likely to vary considerably in relation to a number of factors. First and foremost is the context itself. The specifics of a particular context determine what types of capacities are required to support a state and its citizens in their search for long-term peace and sustainable development, and who is best placed to provide those capacities. This means that mandate alone may not confer a significant advantage to an individual AFP in any given context. That said, AFPs that have a specific thematic or mandated focus on key areas of peacebuilding – such as in relation to rule of law/access to justice, governance or

political empowerment – are more likely to have analytical and programmatic capacities that can be or already are directed towards the broader set of sustaining peace objectives. These include UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, IOM, UNESCO and UNODC.

In practical terms, an AFP's budget, staffing and scale and scope of operations are also variables that will determine the contribution they can make in a particular context. Broadly speaking, larger, humanitarian-focused AFPs, such as UNHCR, WFP, FAO and UNICEF, operate at scale. They often have significant visible presence, both in capitals and in remote areas, which can be key to greater contextual understanding and engagement with the population. This is illustrated, for example, in the analysis developed by the protection cluster under UNHCR's leadership in the Philippines. These AFPs also play a crucial role in the large-scale delivery of basic services and in bolstering national and local authorities where they struggle to cope with increased demand, as illustrated by WFP and UNHCR's support to the Lebanese government's social safety nets for vulnerable Lebanese (together with the World Bank).

Other AFPs, such as ILO, UNFPA, UN-Habitat, UN Women and WHO, commonly operate on a smaller scale with smaller budgets and a lighter presence. They may focus on cultivating relations with key local and national actors that can leave a long-term legacy, such as community empowerment and increased normative or technical capacity in government or civil society institutions. UN Women's support to Women's Peace Committees in Kyrgyzstan monitoring violations of women's rights and conflict risks and support for women's participation in the peace talks in Colombia are illustrative in this regard, as is ILO's role in supporting relations between the state, employers and communities as a key component of promoting social justice.

AFPs that commonly have less presence at field level – those that are often 'non-resident' in conflict contexts – such as UN Environment and UNODC may instead focus on providing targeted or niche technical assistance to central government and the UNCT, or contribute to regional or global objectives relating to sustaining peace that also have an impact at country level. UNEP's efforts to assist the government of Colombia in identifying priority areas of support for implementation of the environmental components of the peace accords and UNODC's global work on prevention of violent extremism and terrorism are examples of this kind of niche work (UNEP, 2017).

A recent assessment of quantitative data relating to the capacities of the UN's development system to support the realisation of the SDGs also gives an indication as to the nature of some AFPs' potential contribution to

6 The 2011 New Deal between the g7+ group of conflict-affected countries and their international partners sets these out in Peacebuilding and Statebuilding Goals. See <http://www.g7plus.org/en/our-journey>.

sustaining peace (i.e. those that are development-oriented) – looking at both SDG 16 and other relevant SDGs.

This data, together with the qualitative data collected through this study and cross-referencing with available budget information, provide a preliminary and subjective assessment of the capacities for sustaining peace of each AFP considered in this review, as outlined in Tables 3 and 4. It is important to emphasise that these tables and the analysis provided above is based on what is effectively a self-assessment by AFPs. Clearly, a more in-depth evaluation of an individual AFP's capacities for sustaining peace is required before more concrete conclusions can be drawn.

The tables suggest a number of interesting points. First, all the AFPs considered in this review have capacities to engage in programming and activities that relate to commonly

identified conflict causes, drivers and triggers. Across the spectrum of AFPs, this capacity is particularly weighted towards addressing socio-economic and governance factors. From a UN system perspective, the less widespread capacities for security and justice among AFPs are augmented by those that exist within select UN Secretariat entities (e.g. DPKO). The comparatively limited capacity to address environmental factors is perhaps more of a concern, particularly given the role that environmental factors, including equitable access to natural resources, play in conflicts and their resolution.

Second, data from the first year of implementing the SDGs suggests that AFPs are committing on average only 14% of their funding for SDG 16 (see Table 4). However, it is likely that some AFP funding supports other SDGs that have a direct relation to sustaining peace, and a few AFPs

Table 3: AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

	OPERATIONAL MODALITY				CONFLICT DRIVER SPECIALISATION				
	Level of field presence	Service delivery	Technical support	Peace-building focus	Societal	Economic	Governance & political	Security & justice	Environmental
AGENCIES, FUNDS & PROGRAMMES									
FAO	○		●	○	●	●	○		○
ILO	○	○	●	○	○	●	○	○	
IOM	●		○	●	●	○			
UN-Habitat	○	○	●	○	○	●	●		●
UN-Women	○	○	●	●	●	○	○	●	○
UNDP	●	○	●	●	●	●	●	●	○
UNEP	○	○	●	●	○		○		●
UNESCO			○	●	●	○			
UNFPA		●	●	○	●				
UNHCR	●	●	○	●	●				
UNICEF	●	●	●	●	●	○	○		
UNODC	○		●	●	○	○	○	●	
UNOPS	●	●	●	○	○	●			
UNRWA	●	●		○	●	●			
WFP	●	●	○	●	●	○			
WHO	○	○	●		●		○		
SECRETARIAT BODIES									
DESA			○		○	○			
DPA	●		●	●			●	●	
DPKO	●	●	●	●			●	●	
OHCHR	○	○	●	●	○		○	●	
PBSO/PBF			●	●	●	○	●	●	○
IFI AFPs EXCLUDED FROM REVIEW									
IMF	○		●			●	●		
World Bank	●		●	●	●	●	●	○	●
IFAD	○	○	●	○	●	●	●		○

○ MINOR OPERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

● SECONDARY FOCUS

● MAJOR FOCUS

Source: ODI study team.

Table 4: AFPs' financial and staffing capacities

	FUNDING REVENUES IN 2015					PERSONNEL (31 DECEMBER 2016)		
	Funds mobilized 2015 (US\$ million)	Of which earmarked (US\$ million)	Of which allocated to SDG 16 (US\$ million), 2016	Earmarked as % of total	SDG 16 as % of total	Total staff (31 Dec 2016)	Staff allocated to SDG 16	SDG 16 staff as % of total
AGENCIES, FUNDS & PROGRAMMES								
FAO	1,474.0	902.8	41	61%	3%	2,945	21	1%
ILO	713.6	260.6	39	37%	5%	3,043	165	5%
IOM	1,603.4	1,596.7	202	100%	13%	10,402	1197	12%
UN-Habitat	212.6	170.1	21	80%	10%	1,772	2	0%
UN-Women	334.6	178.1	30	53%	9%	1,804	171	9%
UNDP	4,593.0	3,800.0	1420	83%	31%	14,713	4123	28%
UNEP	777.0	346.0	35	45%	5%	1,177	97	8%
UNESCO	742.5	365.1	33	49%	4%	2,464	136	6%
UNFPA	992.8	543.3	23	55%	2%	2,633	66	3%
UNHCR	3,582.3	3,029.7	193	85%	5%	1,728	744	43%
UNICEF	5,010.0	3,836.0	879	77%	18%	8,230	1369	17%
UNODC	259.5	234.3	28	90%	11%	76	61	80%
UNOPS	683.3	680.4	706	100%	103%	7,733	1771	23%
UNRWA	1,212.7	573.7	0	47%	0%	34,811	0	0%
WFP	4,910.9	4,807.7	0	98%	0%	6,535	0	0%
WHO	801.4	645.0	117	80%	15%	8,025	214	3%
Total	27,903.6	21,969.4	3767	79%	14%	108,091	10,137	9%
SECRETARIAT BODIES								
DESA								
DPA								
DPKO								
OHCHR								
PBSO/PBF	53.5	-	53.5	0%	100%			
IFI AFPs EXCLUDED FROM REVIEW								
IMF	8,133.0							
World Bank	45,890.0							
IFAD	3,320.0							
Total	57,343.0							

Sources: AFP annual reports and audit reports; Dahlberg (2017).

have made a substantive allocation of resources to SDG 16. This calls for better classification of expenditures to determine what exactly AFPs are committing to sustaining peace (and other overarching UN goals). If this early data does indeed prove indicative of a longer-term commitment, this will be a cause for concern in terms of enabling AFPs to deliver across the breadth of the sustaining peace agenda. Third, capacities do not necessarily directly relate to the size and scale of an AFP. UNDP has the broadest spread of capacities in terms of addressing the key conflict drivers and has significant field presence, the third highest budget overall

and the second highest number of staff allocated to SDG 16-related programming. UN Women has less than a tenth of UNDP's budget, but still has important capabilities in relation to four out of the five key conflict drivers.

Overall, the tables give a visual representation of the breadth and nature of the capacities AFPs have in relation to sustaining peace. But they do not show the ability to deliver peace outcomes, a point that applies to all AFPs. The following sections explore these capacities in more detail in relation to vision and leadership, programming, resources and partnerships.

3. AFPs' capacities for sustaining peace: vision and leadership

The review considered the extent to which AFPs have a clear vision of sustaining peace; how this is articulated, shared and 'owned' by staff; and how relevant AFP staff (at HQ and country level) consider the sustaining peace agenda to be to their overall mandate and, for country-based staff, their operating context.

3.1. AFPs' vision and understanding of 'sustaining peace'

At least 85% of respondents to the online survey conducted for this review indicated that they believed their respective AFP had a clear vision of sustaining peace. This was not always supported by the field research or in headquarters interviews, however. In interviews, AFP staff working in UNICEF, ILO, FAO and WFP in Lebanon and the Philippines initially articulated the term as applicable once a peace agreement has been reached, and noted that, especially in Lebanon, there was as yet no 'peace' to 'sustain'. However, in the course of the discussion, they did recognise its relevance for their organisation's mandate and objectives. In Kyrgyzstan, there was good knowledge of the concept of sustaining peace amongst AFP staff interviewed, but it was not clear to what extent, if at all, it had significantly changed the way the UNCT worked together (for instance in terms of more joint conflict analysis). In Liberia, AFP staff interviewed frequently used the phrase 'sustaining peace', but not in a way that signalled an understanding of how applying it would change current collective practice. The recent 'peacebuilding plan' submitted to the UNSC in April – 'Sustaining Peace and Securing Development' – while addressing critical economic reforms recognised as essential prerequisites to drive economic growth and pro-poor policies, nevertheless did not specifically include outcomes and outputs by AFPs identified under Pillar II of the UNDAF on 'Sustainable Economic Transformation'.

This begs the question whether these priorities fall outside the otherwise comprehensive and integrated sustaining peace agenda (UNSC, 2017a).

The concept of sustaining peace seems to have been more clearly understood and adopted in Colombia, where the UNCT leadership, particularly the RC/HC, were vocal proponents of this agenda. AFP staff interviewed mostly had an understanding of the concept and its relevance to their role. There also appeared to be a concerted effort to bring AFPs together around an integrated strategy to support the peace process. The UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN-MPTF) approved in February 2016 to support the peace process sets up mechanisms and processes to incentivise inter-agency collaboration and coordination to this end.

At headquarters there was a more consistent understanding of the concept among AFPs interviewed. Several AFPs, including UNDP, UNESCO, ILO and IOM, indicated that they considered the components of sustaining peace as being at the heart of their mandate. Some others, including UNHCR, have integrated sustaining peace-related objectives in corporate strategic plans or, like FAO, have developed specific corporate frameworks for sustaining peace. Others, including WHO and WFP, acknowledged that they are still in the process of outlining what this agenda means in terms of their respective mandates, and for their programmes and operations.

There is, however, still some misunderstanding among some AFP staff interviewed at HQ and field levels of the broader scope of sustaining peace, particularly the fact that it expands beyond traditional peacebuilding approaches and places a greater emphasis on the mutually reinforcing interaction of the UN's three foundational pillars of peace and security, development and human rights before, during and after conflict. This was echoed in interviews with some staff of Secretariat departments, particularly DPA, who felt

7 UNFPA staff were the most self-critical, with 32% of respondents disagreeing with this statement, followed by UNICEF, with 29%. UNOPS was notable in that all 32 respondents felt that the organisation had a clearly articulated vision of its contribution to sustaining peace.

that most AFPs, with the exception of UNDP, UN Women and perhaps a few others, did not have a significant role to play in this integrated agenda because they do not generally programme in the areas of security, rule of law, justice and governance.

The research indicates that capacity among AFP leadership to support the roll-out and implementation of sustaining peace varies. In the online survey, 71% of UNICEF staff indicated that the UN system in their country office or headquarters did not have adequate leadership capacity to deliver on the goal of supporting sustainable peace, while 100% of UN Women staff felt the opposite. There was also a suggestion by some UN and non-UN interviewees that there was a general need for AFP leadership to articulate more authoritatively (internally and externally) that their respective institution had a responsibility in relation to the sustaining peace agenda. Without a clearer vision, articulation and commitment by heads of AFPs (and buy-in from their staff), ‘sustaining peace’ as an overarching goal for the whole UN system is unlikely to become embedded in the work of their institutions. Although AFPs are starting to respond to the Secretary-General’s call for the UN system to focus on prevention, rolling out the sustaining peace agenda in its broader sense seems to be more challenging, particularly for those AFPs with a greater focus on humanitarian response. Without clearly articulating the contribution they make on the ground and/or at global level, AFPs will also be unable to counter the view of other actors in the system that their work is not particularly relevant to this agenda. Some, like WFP and FAO, are developing new organisational strategies around the 2030 Agenda. Such processes offer an opportunity to rethink how AFPs’ activities can contribute to the sustaining peace agenda across the three UN pillars.

3.2. AFPs’ governing bodies

All the AFPs considered in this review have governing boards composed of Member States of the UN, to which they directly report. These governing bodies determine, to a large extent, how AFPs interpret their mandates and their institutional priorities. In headquarters interviews, several AFPs indicated that some representatives of Member States on their boards are not, or are not likely to be, supportive of their engagement in the sustaining peace agenda, either for political reasons, such as sensitivity to the perceived ‘politicisation’ of an AFP’s role, or for fear that it may detract from their core mandated activities. This is despite these same Member States in the UNGA and UNSC tasking the UN system with sustaining peace. Indeed, in an ECOSOC and PBC discussion in 2016, Member States acknowledged ‘their own fragmentation at national level’, with ‘sometimes divergent views expressed in different intergovernmental

bodies – that divide security, peacebuilding, humanitarian and development issues’ (ECOSOC and PBC, 2016: 3). The views of Member States’ representatives on AFP governing boards have a direct impact on the degree to which some AFPs may be able to engage openly in the sustaining peace agenda, articulating it as an institutional goal, which in turn affects their ability to reorient their internal capacities to achieve related objectives.

3.3. Resident Coordinators

The role and leadership of RCs is central to delivering on the sustaining peace agenda at country level. This was evidenced in the five case studies considered in this review. The RCs in these contexts were invariably praised by stakeholders in country for their leadership in relation to sustaining peace. In Colombia, the RC was regarded by stakeholders as leading the UNCT in a strategic collective effort (though still somewhat nascent) to support the implementation of the recent peace agreement. The RC in Kyrgyzstan was similarly commended for his efforts to forge a constructive but critical relationship with the government, highlighting how this had enabled him to influence proposed legislation on LGBTQ issues and a proposed law to restrict the activities of foreign-funded NGOs. In Lebanon, the RC/HC/DSCL was seen as critical in driving AFPs towards more integrated and joined-up ways of working, particularly around addressing societal tensions and stabilisation. In Liberia, an integrated mission context, the RC and DSRSG was widely perceived as adept at handling the political dimension of his peacebuilding role – as was seen in the process of consultation with Liberian stakeholders outside government around the new peacebuilding plan.

Box 3: The Resident Coordinator function

The Resident Coordinator (RC) is the designated representative of, and reports to, the Secretary-General who, as chair of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), tasks the UNDP Administrator in his/her capacity as chair of the UN Development Group (UNDG) to be the first line of reporting. An RC is accredited by a letter from the SG to the head of state or government, and acts as the government’s primary UN interlocutor. The RC upholds the UN’s responsibilities in regard to preventing and responding to serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including the responsibilities of UN entities and staff in this regard. Finally, the RC ensures that the interests of non-resident agencies are adequately represented, including in the development of UNDAFs (UNDOCO, 2016).

Beyond the case studies, however, this review identified key challenges pertaining to the capacities of RCs and their offices that, while not new, are likely to affect the ability of UNCTs to contribute to sustaining peace in a given context. The authority of RCs as leaders of UNCTs is crucial to their ability to bring AFPs at country level together around a common objective or goal, including sustaining peace. However, stakeholders in this review highlighted that this authority is too often undermined by a number of linked factors, including the attitude adopted towards RCs by heads of AFPs in the UNCT, who invariably prioritise accountability to their own entities over the RC; a lack of adequate skills in terms of leadership and stakeholder management among some RCs; staffing capacities of RC Offices (RCOs); and the specific features and history of the UN country presence. Stakeholders in this review also highlighted the impact that the (perceived) conflict of interest between the supposedly neutral role of an RC in leading the UNCT and their often concurrent leadership of a member organisation of the UNCT (i.e. UNDP) had on RCs' ability to command the authority needed to coordinate UNCTs. From a practical perspective, it was also clear that RCs may not always have access to the specialist human resources they need to deliver on this complex agenda. This includes staff capacities for joint analysis and planning, establishing common monitoring and evaluation processes, operational coordination and, importantly, capacities for establishing and maintaining relations with all relevant political stakeholders in a country (i.e. not just the central government). However, even if these were addressed, RCs would still not be in a position to formally direct AFPs in country unless the latter were explicitly tasked with sustaining peace objectives within a commonly agreed and financed framework. Giving RCs' responsibility for administering larger or expanded pooled funds (see Section 5.2) would increase their influence with both AFPs and Member States.

Stakeholders also highlighted concerns that not all RCs are willing to engage in activities that may challenge elite behaviours and the interests of the host government. The case studies for this review presented positive examples in this regard, but these were based on a very small sample of countries which were regarded by stakeholders as performing better than the average. UN and non-UN stakeholders expressed concern that, in many cases, the role of the RC has become synonymous with supporting the host government, and in some cases to the effective exclusion of support to other national actors or agendas that challenge central government. There is a body of literature that indicates that the UN has the potential to unwittingly legitimise or delegitimise governments and their challengers (see Section 2 above).

In terms of integrated mission and non-mission settings, the review did not look at enough case studies to make any definitive comment on how the leadership of the RC differs

in such scenarios. However, some stakeholders in the field and at HQ felt that, where RCs were also designated as DSRSGs and Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) – so-called 'triple-hatting' – this structural link with the mission and the humanitarian community tended to facilitate a more integrated approach to peace-related objectives across the UN system and may also empower them in their relations with host governments.

The positive examples from the case studies selected by the WGT for the review appear to have largely been the result of the personal skills and energy of the RCs in post and other members of the UNCT. This echoes previous reviews that have signalled that 'the ability of the RC to bring coherence into this system characterized by centrifugal forces is not based on the RC's formal authorities which are relatively limited, but on the personal skills of the RC and the cooperative spirit of the UNCT members' (Lindores, 2012). But a system that is deeply reliant on the personal skills of the RC has inherent weaknesses and inhibits the effective delivery of collective agendas such as sustaining peace. In his report on the repositioning of the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda, the SG stressed that a "primus inter pares" arrangement, dependent on the goodwill and understanding of the heads of UN agencies, funds and programmes at country level, will no longer suffice' (UNSG, 2017a: 13:64).

Overall, the predominant view among the stakeholders in this review is that, notwithstanding positive examples of country-level leadership, in the current form and function, the RC system does not have adequate capacity to deliver the kind of authoritative leadership needed to drive the system-wide change at country level that implementing the sustaining peace agenda requires.

3.4. The Secretary-General's leadership

Although the UNSC and UNGA resolutions predate his appointment, the sustaining peace agenda has become synonymous with the priorities of the current SG in the eyes of many UN staff, particularly at HQ level, and his personal conviction for this agenda, particularly the prevention element, is clear. Such a strong personal vision is essential to garnering system-wide engagement. However, many staff and other stakeholders highlighted that this vision has not yet been fully translated into an operational plan for clarifying and rolling out this overarching goal as a system-wide priority. Integrating a more holistic and ambitious approach to the prevention and mitigation of conflict and post-conflict support into UN policy, structures, culture and operations will involve a significant degree of 'silo busting', and will require leadership and implementation monitoring by the Secretariat and full support from Member States through the governing boards of AFPs. There was a lack of clarity amongst stakeholders interviewed for this review around

how the important focus on ‘prevention’ articulated by the SG relates to the sustaining peace agenda articulated by Member States. There is also a degree of uncertainty as to how these two agendas are linked, in operational or policy terms, with Agenda 2030. Noting the many competing agendas and operational priorities currently facing AFPs, facilitating the transformational change that is required to reorient AFPs (and the wider UN system) towards sustaining peace will necessitate consistent and clear messaging and objective-setting, including operational and political direction and support from the SG and his leadership team.

Institutionally, AFPs appreciate the importance of sustaining peace as a system-wide objective that lies at the heart of the UN’s global role. However, noting the recent development of the concept, it has yet to filter down to where it will make a difference – in the operations and programmes implemented by AFPs at country level. There is a risk that this will not change if sustaining peace is seen primarily as a political and security function, despite the significant emphasis placed by the UNSC and UNGA on the importance of building on all three UN pillars – human rights, peace and security and development – in a mutually reinforcing way.

4. AFPs' capacities for sustaining peace: programming

The review considered the extent to which conflict causes, drivers and triggers are included in analytical frameworks; the extent to which sustaining peace is a stated objective in planning processes; the extent to which impact relating to sustaining peace is included in frameworks for monitoring and evaluation; the extent to which programmes are adaptable and responsive to changes in the context relating to sustaining peace; and the extent to which this goal is being pursued in joined-up, collaborative and coherent ways.

4.1. Conflict and context analysis

All stakeholders highlighted the importance of adequate conflict or context analysis as the basis for conflict-sensitive programming and for programmes specifically designed to support peace outcomes. However, the majority of interviewees at HQ and in the field also expressed concern that this is perhaps where the biggest gap in capacities and practices lies for most AFPs and across the group of AFPs.

At HQ, some AFPs explained that they do not have institutional frameworks or tools for context or conflict analysis, and that this is not necessarily a formal part of preparation for their portfolio of programmes in a given context. Others, however, felt that their AFP had, or had access to, the analytical tools they needed. UNDP was highlighted, including by other AFPs, as having dedicated capacity – human resources and tools – for conflict analysis, including Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs), who are deployed jointly with DPA, as well as HQ capacities, including consultants and analytical frameworks such as the new Conflict and Development Analysis (CDA), developed by UNDP and adopted by UNDG. Whilst the approach may not always be institutionalised, the case studies showed that most AFPs on the ground do undertake some form of conflict analysis, though its depth and scope vary. In the Philippines, for example, UNICEF conducts conflict analysis as part of its programmes targeting former child soldiers. In Lebanon, UNDP funded a series of localised conflict analysis reports.

At UNCT level, conflict or context analysis is generally conducted formally as part of common planning processes, as evidenced in the five country case studies. In Colombia, for example, the UNCT has developed a specific diagnostic tool for the MDTF, and conflict analysis is one of several tools used by AFPs to inform programming. These analyses, which are conducted at sub-national level, inform proposals for activities in support of the implementation of the peace agreement. While they are a recent inter-agency effort, and it was not possible to assess their effectiveness within the scope of this review, there appeared to be considerable buy-in and a shared sense of ownership by AFPs. In Kyrgyzstan, the UNCT's 2013 Peacebuilding Needs Assessment (which had a large gender component) and the more recent Concept Note on the Prevention of Violent Extremism represent significant efforts by UNCT members to pool capacities and knowledge to produce a more in-depth, shared understanding of the context. In Lebanon, the Social Stability Working Group (SSWG) of the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) has established a mechanism for gathering data on local-level tensions across the country, and aggregating this in a working draft that is regularly updated. This continuous analysis is well-regarded, having enabled the Working Group to respond in a coordinated way to increases in local tensions. More often, however, conflict or context analysis is a one-off or irregular activity conducted as part of the annual planning cycles of UNCTs.

There is also some concern, as evidenced in several of the case studies and in HQ interviews, that shared context analysis across the UNCT or wider UN system in country tends to focus primarily on the high-level politics of the conflict or crisis, rather than developing a more holistic conflict analysis that brings together the political and socio-economic factors relevant in a conflict or crisis, along with historical, identity, political-economy and geopolitical issues. In the Philippines, for example, the UNCT was primarily concerned with the political relationship between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and National Democratic Front (NDF)/Communist Party of

the Philippines (CPP), and put less effort into analysing local-level conflict drivers and risks relating to social or community tensions or socio-economic development.

Overall, stakeholders felt there was an urgent need for enhanced capacities in RCOs (whether in mission or non-mission settings) for analysis, including developing opportunities for shared analysis among the various members of the UNCT. The joint DPA–UNDP programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention is considered by field and HQ staff of several stakeholders to be an important resource in this respect, but one that could be further expanded and improved, as discussed later. In Colombia, it was not clear how consistently AFPs shared their conflict analysis (outside the current diagnostic tool developed under the Medium Term Development Fund (MTDF)). However, there is clearly a solid shared understanding of the political economy of the conflict and related governance and development implications across AFPs, and this approach may offer useful lessons for other contexts.

There was a general understanding among AFPs at headquarters of their weaknesses in relation to conflict analysis – both as individual entities and as UNCTs. In addressing this gap, there was also clearly an appetite for pooling what capacities may exist across AFPs at HQ and in the field. In Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon and the Philippines, for example, conflict analysis conducted by UNDP was shared with AFPs and considered by them to be valuable, though it is unclear how this analysis was ultimately used or integrated into their programmes.

AFPs were also keen to contribute to and benefit from analysis and assessment processes undertaken by and with Secretariat departments (at HQ and country level). However, there was concern among staff at headquarters that existing mechanisms and tools for this do not always work adequately: some stakeholders highlighted that integrated assessment and planning processes (IAPs), which produce the Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) for integrated missions, tend to focus on high-level political analysis that is of primary interest to the Secretariat departments which lead these processes, but less useful for AFPs' programming considerations. In the country case studies for this review, experience was mixed: there was limited sharing of analysis between the UNCT, UNIFIL and UNSCOL in Lebanon. In Kyrgyzstan, the UNRCCA has supported the RC in conflict analysis. In Liberia, the SRSG's Office was provided with regular, high-quality conflict analysis by the UNMIL Peace Consolidation Service, but its politically sensitive nature meant that circulation to the UNCT was strictly limited. More generally, the development of Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessments (RPBAs) appears to offer opportunities for more sophisticated joint analysis, and this was noted by

staff interviewed in both Liberia and Kyrgyzstan. The RPBA, developed jointly by the UN, the European Union (EU) and the World Bank, offers a standardised assessment framework aimed at jointly analysing the underlying causes and impacts of conflict and crisis (EU, World Bank and UN, 2017).

Practical issues may also make it difficult for AFPs and UNCTs to develop more sophisticated or in-depth joint conflict analysis. By their very nature, fragile and conflict-affected contexts are highly complex and dynamic, and it is invariably difficult for an international entity to gain a totally comprehensive understanding of the multiple layers or causes, drivers and triggers of violence. Recognising this, the New Deal agreed between the G7+ group of 20 fragility-affected countries and their international partners calls for joint assessments of fragility. AFPs that have greater operational presence may have more scope to conduct in-depth conflict analysis, though insecurity and/or funding may restrict their deep-field presence, and therefore their proximity to local actors and communities. The sensitivities of a host government may also restrict how AFPs or UNCTs engage with some conflict risks or drivers, at least publicly. In Colombia, despite the in-depth understanding that most AFPs have of the context, including as a result of their strong engagement with civil society and non-state actors at national and sub-national level, interviews in the field suggest that some resident AFPs are reluctant to stray publicly from the official government line.

Overall, the most widely held concerns regarding conflict analysis, expressed by stakeholders at HQ and in the field, were in relation to a failure to translate whatever conflict or context analysis exists into more conflict-sensitive, politically smart programming by AFPs, individually and jointly, as discussed below. There is also a sense among some non-AFP stakeholders that AFPs may be missing important opportunities to enrich their shared analysis of the conflict context with that of key donor countries, multilateral partners (including IFIs) and, importantly, with the communities they serve. However, it is noted that sharing analysis may require greater sensitivity in some contexts than others.

4.2. Coordinated planning, tools and implementation

In all of the five countries considered as part of this review UNCTs had developed common strategies utilising standard UN planning tools and frameworks that articulate objectives relevant to sustaining peace. The current UNDAF (2012–18) for the UNCT in the Philippines, for example, highlights UN support to the national peace process and the government's PAMANA programme.⁸ In Colombia, the current UNDAF as well

8 PAMANA is a government programme to extend development interventions to isolated, hard-to-reach and conflict-affected communities.

as the MDTF are oriented towards peacebuilding and sustainable development, and specifically aim to support the government's stabilisation strategy. In Lebanon the UN Integrated Strategic Framework (2017–20) (developed by AFPs, UNSCOL, UNIFIL and other UN entities) articulates clear narratives around stability and the prevention of further violence and conflict, including considering factors that predate the influx of Syrian refugees.

Views on standard UN assessment and planning tools and their usefulness to the sustaining peace agenda were mixed. Some stakeholders suggested that UNDAFs and ISFs were not fit for the purpose of sustaining peace, though on closer examination it seems that the problems associated with these tools may relate more to process and how they are used than to their actual content. UNDAFs, for example, are in most cases developed every five years, which is insufficient for dynamic contexts and often renders them effectively obsolete, as is the case in the Philippines. Some stakeholders also felt that the UNDAF process was not sufficiently inclusive of all areas of a UNCT's work, and was dominated by the larger development AFPs, particularly UNDP. ISF processes, including in Colombia, have been criticised as too exclusive, with some AFPs contributing only through OCHA or UNDP, rather than directly, and dominated by the interests of the Secretariat departments leading the process, particularly DPKO.

UNCTs in the five case studies considered in this review had also developed stand-alone plans for engagement on peace-related objectives that were more context-specific and dynamic than the standard UNDAF and ISF planning frameworks. The Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017–20 (led by the government and developed with UN and non-UN partners), for example, constitutes the government's national plan for addressing the refugee crisis, and has evolved in recent years to include a significant focus on meeting the needs of the most vulnerable Lebanese, and easing tensions between host communities and Syrian refugees. In Liberia, the newly revised national Peace Building Plan is by necessity phased over the short term and only sets out medium-term objectives (2020) in the broadest sense. Longer-term peacebuilding priorities will need to be developed with the new administration when it is in place at the end of this year. In Kyrgyzstan, the UNCT has worked with the government and other national actors in developing the Peacebuilding Priority Plan, which includes a new focus on tackling violent extremism and cross-border conflict. In 2012, the Philippines UNCT developed a joint vision for supporting national efforts for peace and development in Mindanao, and in 2015 developed a corresponding Mindanao Convergence Action Plan.

Translating these plans into a common or joint operational plan of action and joint programmes that respond effectively to needs on the ground seems to have posed more of a challenge. The picture emerging from the case studies was mixed. In the Philippines, the

review found a lack of clarity and coordination around which AFPs were doing what activities or programmes. Kyrgyzstan benefited from a strong PBF-supported programme that was highlighted positively in the SG's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/71/792) in February 2017, but stakeholders complained that the funding allocation process was complex and, in the words of some, 'demanding'. This, combined with the fluidity of the context, resulted in some projects being funded late in the cycle, leaving too little time for meaningful implementation. In Lebanon there has been more effective joint work-planning and new joined-up programming initiatives are being developed. In Colombia under the MDTF, the focus is on inter-agency coordination and collaboration: in April 2017, 18 out of 30 proposed initiatives for funding were for inter-agency work.

Beyond the case studies, senior staff interviewed indicated that AFPs often fail to set aside their institutional mandates and agendas and invest fully in achieving collective outcomes, even where these have been agreed. Responses to the survey from Afghanistan suggested that the collective contribution of AFPs to sustaining peace is unknown, and highlighted limited integration in individual agency projects. In the words of one respondent, 'there is no overt collective vision, programme design or implementation specifically for peacebuilding across the UN system in Afghanistan'.

Several factors were highlighted in relation to inadequate coordination among UNCT members in planning and programme implementation. First, as evidenced in all five case studies, the perennial challenge involved in accessing adequate funding continues to pit AFPs against each other, creating competition for visibility and funding and acting as a disincentive to coordination and teamwork. In Colombia the MDTF is structured to incentivise joint working, but diminishing resources in a 'post-conflict' context has meant that competition for funding remains. Second, the process for developing common or joint plans does not necessarily translate into shared 'ownership'. Different planning cycles and tools among AFPs also create practical challenges. In Kyrgyzstan, stakeholders expressed different views on the newly signed UNDAF: some felt it to be clearly focused on the government's priorities, while others saw the process as less challenging and strategic than it could have been, and overly influenced by programmes already in the pipeline. The prioritisation of AFPs' own programmes in UNDAFs was seen as a common problem by some headquarters interviewees, partly as a result of the mandates which shape AFPs' approach to programming, and which limit the extent to which an AFP can contribute to activities outside of its mandate.

Standard inter-agency planning tools evidently lack the flexibility to respond to changing conditions in volatile and fragile contexts. While more dynamic, lighter planning frameworks are needed, sustaining peace objectives will be met only if these plans are implemented. Ensuring that the right tools and processes are in place to facilitate more coordinated and effective UNCT efforts to support

sustaining peace is crucial, but caution is required in considering new generic tools. Creating such tools without addressing long-standing problems related to how they are used and their analytical underpinnings is unlikely to result in better or more collaborative performance. Guidance on lighter, more dynamic joint planning processes, based on lessons from the case studies considered in this review, may support more appropriate common planning and implementation by UNCTs.

4.3. Programme design and conflict sensitivity

Interviews at field and HQ levels indicate that capacities for ensuring well-designed programmes targeted at peace outcomes, and for ensuring that other programmes are more conflict-sensitive, are not always adequate – with some AFPs having greater knowledge and expertise in these areas than others. PBSO, for example, highlighted that the proposals it receives for PBF funding often lack evidence of how a particular programme will address specific peace-building or sustaining peace objectives, even where the contextual analysis supporting the programme is solid. Submissions from AFPs to this review indicate that many have institutional frameworks for conflict-sensitive approaches, but the case studies suggest that these are not necessarily resulting in more conflict-sensitive programming or operations at country level.

The review indicates that, for humanitarian-focused AFPs such as UNICEF and WFP, sustaining peace is invariably a secondary, rather than a primary, objective. For UNHCR and UNRWA it is not a consideration at all, according to HQ staff interviewed in this review (though notably UNHCR has integrated sustaining peace-related objectives into corporate strategic plans). They did, however, acknowledge that some of their agencies' programmes may potentially have an unplanned or indirect impact on sustaining peace. Clearly, not all AFPs will have programmes that target peace outcomes, but as the wealth of literature on humanitarian aid shows, ensuring more conflict-sensitive approaches is crucial if programme design is to minimise any negative impacts on local political, social or economic dynamics (see for example Saferworld, 2016). This was raised by a number of UN and non-UN stakeholders, who felt that, in failing to institute more adaptable strategies and methodologies for humanitarian and development programming in fragile and crisis-affected states, AFPs are not only missing opportunities to contribute to sustaining peace, but also risking negatively impacting upon local political or peace dynamics.

In Lebanon, the refugee crisis response has become more conflict-sensitive over time, but for programmes with

targeted peace outcomes, theories of change are not always well-evidenced or cohesive. Staff interviewed were aware of the importance of conflict sensitivity, but indicated that there is at times a failure to apply it to programme design and implementation, or to the way AFPs operate. This was echoed in a 2014 assessment of capacities for conflict sensitivity in the primary healthcare sector (Integrity and International Alert, 2014). In Kyrgyzstan and Liberia, where relations between population groups are a key factor in conflict tensions, some AFPs' national staff hiring practices, which are of course sensitive in conflict contexts, could be more systematically monitored to help ensure that they are not inadvertently reinforcing elite groups. In Liberia, where sexual and social violence is a threat to sustaining peace, there is clearly a need for greater action from UNMIL and UNCT leadership to end institutional tolerance for UN staff engagement in commercial transactional sex, which has been a historic challenge (Beber and Guardado, 2016).

Colombia was something of an exception among the case studies in this regard. AFPs there tended to have a sound understanding of the context, including from both their individual and collective analyses, and were able to integrate this into programmes, ensuring a more conflict-sensitive approach. This may reflect the long-standing presence of AFPs in the country, and their work on conflict-related issues as relevant to their organisational mandate. Through this history they have (to varying degrees) developed long-term relationships and networks with a range of stakeholders among CSOs, the state and government, at national and sub-national levels. In addition, some AFPs have drawn on the wealth of national capabilities and expertise across different governance and development issues that have been the intellectual driving force behind the peace process and previous mechanisms relating to transitional justice, reparations and land restitution.

4.4. Integrating gender in programme design and implementation

Responses to the survey suggest a high degree of confidence that AFPs systematically integrate gender into their analysis and programming in general, and, where they undertake them, programmes related to sustaining peace: over 93% of respondents felt that AFPs do this.⁹ Interviews at headquarters supported this, with all AFPs saying that gender has been embedded as an institutional approach, including throughout their programme cycles. FAO, for example, has recently developed a conceptual framework aimed at understanding how 'addressing the specific priorities of men and women in food and nutrition

⁹ The only slight exception was UNESCO, where 50% of staff felt that the integration of gender into its analysis was acceptable, rather than excellent or good, and a small percentage (3.5%) of UN Women and UNFPA staff, who felt that it was poor.

interventions in conflict-affected contexts may shape peacebuilding processes and improve gender equality in the aftermath of violent conflicts' (FAO, 2017: vi).

However, the field research indicates that actual deployment of these capacities is mixed. In the Philippines, staff from UN Women had concerns that the key AFPs engaged in programmes related to sustaining peace do not adequately take into account the gender dimensions of the conflict and its drivers in their analysis, which they attributed in part to a lack of gender advisors. A similar point was highlighted by the 2016 review of the Facility for Advisory Support for Transition Capacities (FASTRAC) mechanism.¹⁰ In both Liberia and Kyrgyzstan, the UNCT's capacities to promote gender equality have been strengthened by the presence and leadership of UN Women, and thanks to substantial voluntary support from donors. As a result, gender was successfully mainstreamed within PBF-supported AFP programmes, including monitoring and evaluation, in Kyrgyzstan. In Liberia, a 'One Gender Framework' set out gender priorities agreed by the government and by the entire UN system. In Colombia, UN Women has played an important role in supporting women's engagement in the peace process, and also more generally in supporting a gendered perspective to transitional justice, addressing conflict-related SGBV and securing reparations for victims. UN Women has also helped women's groups shape the agenda on conflict issues and transitional justice, and in the peace talks in Havana. While the formal participation of women was hugely disappointing – initially only one woman was present at the negotiating table (on the part of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC)) – women's movements did have an important influence on the content of the agreement. This – and the role of UN Women in supporting these movements – has been documented mostly through qualitative analysis (UN Women, 2013b; Domingo et al., 2015; Bouvier, 2016). The peace agreement contains a strong commitment to taking gender into account in relation to all its components and to women's rights.

Despite some positive examples, the resources and expertise to advance gender equality as it relates to sustaining peace are still limited. The AGE report pointed out that 'the slowness of United Nations entities on the ground in coming forward with genuinely peacebuilding-oriented gender-related programming proposals, rather than thinly repackaged existing initiatives (a phenomenon that affects more than just the issue of gender) has limited both progress and impact' (UN, 2015a: 30). This resonates across all types of humanitarian programming – not just those related to sustaining peace: the 2015 review of the IASC's gender policy (Fawzi El Solh, 2015) found that, by

and large, it had failed to deliver on gender equality or the empowerment of women. The review also underscored that a very limited amount of humanitarian funding goes towards gender equality issues.

4.5. Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Notwithstanding the general challenges of measuring programme impact, this review indicated that, in relation to sustaining peace, this is a weak area for most AFPs, and the case studies found few concrete examples of joint monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) of programmes implemented as part of collective or joint strategies. Some stakeholders indicated that AFPs still tend to focus on outputs rather than outcomes in their monitoring and evaluation frameworks, in part because of the short-term nature of donor funding and the requirement to demonstrate 'results'. This tendency is also likely related to the inherent challenge of developing outcome indicators for programmes related to sustaining peace. This was highlighted as a challenge in the 2015 Global Study on Women, Peace and Security (UN Women, 2015d), which found that peace outcomes at country level were largely unmeasured. In the Philippines, individual AFPs and the UNCT collectively have struggled to develop adequate indicators (an issue also highlighted in the 2016 FASTRAC review).

There is more positive progress in some of the other case studies. In Lebanon, most AFPs had conflict indicators of some form in their monitoring frameworks, and the Social Stability Sector Working Group is reflecting on how to improve monitoring and learning within the UNCT and its partners, though this is limited to specific programmes. In Kyrgyzstan, the recent Endline Assessment of the UNCT's Peacebuilding Priority Plan is a good example of joint monitoring, and is appreciated by the Joint Steering Committee. However, some stakeholders stressed that competition between AFPs still discourages shared learning, especially learning from failure. In Liberia, UNMIL and UNDP have used quantitative techniques for measuring impact in their social cohesion and reconciliation index, which may prove a useful model.

Better tools and guidance for monitoring the implementation and impact of sustaining peace plans and programmes are clearly needed. These should include benchmarks for monitoring outcomes, and should take an integrated view across AFPs to help strengthen incentives for achieving shared objectives and for working across the UN and with other partners and stakeholders. A stronger culture of sharing learning across AFPs and the wider UN system will also be critical to ensuring that these lessons are integrated into programme design, including in real time.

10 The FASTRAC mechanism, agreed between the MILF and the Philippines government, was launched in April 2013. Jointly managed by the UN and the World Bank, it aims to support the transition to the new Bangsamoro political entity by providing technical support to the parties involved.

5. AFPs' capacities for sustaining peace: resources

The review considered the resources – human, financial and tools or guidance – that are available to or deployed by AFPs and UNCTs in respect of sustaining peace, and how relevant or useful they are to this goal.

5.1. Human resources

From a substantive and technical perspective, most AFPs interviewed at headquarters felt that, institutionally, they did not have significant gaps in staffing in relation to their entities' role in sustaining peace, but that there was a need to upgrade and consolidate existing staff skills and capacities. This stands in slight contrast to the survey results: 52% of survey respondents felt that their organisation did not have adequate staff capacity (and financial and/or technical resources) to contribute to sustaining peace. In the case of UN Women and UNESCO the figure was 62%, and for WFP and FAO 60%. The information in Table 3 shows that this may well be the case for WFP, FAO and possibly UN-Habitat in terms of staff numbers, but no information is available on the skill levels and experience of staff working more generally on the sustaining peace agenda, which is likely to be more relevant than numbers per se. Several stakeholders highlighted that, in some AFPs (including UNICEF and UNDP), technical capacities for sustaining peace work had declined in recent years as a result of institutional reforms, changes in institutional priorities and reductions in dedicated staff and funding.

Some AFPs, such as UNDP, UN Women, FAO and UNOPS, explained that they are attempting to augment staff skills and knowledge in key areas such as conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive programming by partnering with specialised INGOs or academic and research institutions. UNESCO is able to draw on its Category I institute, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace & Sustainable Development, for knowledge and learning, including in relation to its PVE work, and UNOPS has partnerships with World Vision International, PeaceNexus and the Danish Institute of International Studies to augment its knowledge and practice in conflict-sensitive programming. In Colombia, collaboration with national researchers, universities and think tanks is a regular feature of AFPs' engagement, reflecting strong national capacities in this area. More

generally, there was also a feeling among UN staff interviewed that sharing knowledge, skills and experience relevant to sustaining peace across the UN system – such as training by DPA on conflict analysis or sensitivity (as is happening in Somalia) – could help address skills gaps in a cost-effective way.

There is also a question regarding the balance of specialised in-house capacities and the use of short-term external consultants. UNDP and UNOPS use consultants extensively, which can allow for the relatively rapid expansion of projects at country level. However, this may limit opportunities for institutional learning if mechanisms to capture and share such learning from consultants are not in place. In Kyrgyzstan, some stakeholders were concerned that bringing in international consultants for conflict analysis did not provide value for money; similar concerns were raised in Liberia in respect of the use of consultants for MEL. Information on AFPs' regional capacities was limited, but UNDP pointed out that it had relocated some of its technical staff to regional offices and that, from there, they are well-placed to complement in-country capacities, in particular to support planning and programme design and monitoring and evaluation.

A few AFPs, including IOM, FAO and UN Women, felt that additional targeted funding was needed for key staffing capacities, specifically analytical capacity and to enable AFPs with HQs outside New York to participate in global coordination activities on this agenda. However, most AFP staff interviewed also recognised that they were unlikely to obtain significant additional funding in the current climate. In terms of capacities across the system, there is a clear shortage of a multi-dimensional or multi-skilled capacity that can be rapidly deployed in situations of emerging or escalating crisis to support RCs and UNCTs in responding to the changing context, such as a multi-disciplinary team that can assist UNCTs to reorient their analysis and strategies. Where talented and experienced staff do exist, stakeholders felt that they are not used effectively for the benefit of the wider system. In this regard, several stakeholders at headquarters and in the field highlighted the value that had been offered by UNDP's Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) and recommended that such deployable capacity be re-established, and made available to other

UN agencies. Stakeholders also highlighted the value of national staff with local knowledge in enhancing country-level capacities for conflict analysis, though national staff are not always called upon for such tasks.

Many UN stakeholders in this review highlighted the long-standing problem of inadequate staffing in RCOs – both in key technical areas such as conflict analysis and conflict-sensitive approaches and in core functions such as coordination and promoting information exchange and good inter-agency relationships. As several stakeholders pointed out, HCs, in contrast, have an entire OCHA office at their disposal, with multiple staff dedicated to operational coordination, communications, financial management, resource mobilisation and context and vulnerability analysis. Given the limited availability of additional financial resources, addressing this problem could involve relocating staff from HQ to country offices, and from AFPs and HQs to RCOs, as well as recruiting or redeploying national staff with the requisite expertise.

Stakeholders also highlighted the value of PDAs in supporting the RC and the UNCT, including through leading the development of shared analysis and joint processes and fora to support sustaining peace, building relations with national actors and supporting the development of MEL methodologies. However, according to some stakeholders PDAs have in some cases been seen or used as a resource for the RC rather than for the UNCT at large, and the temporary nature of deployments means that this mechanism cannot address capacity gaps in the long term. It is clear nonetheless that such technical capacity is valued, and was mentioned repeatedly during HQ interviews and field studies. Expanding PDA profiles to include skills/expertise in integrating context analysis into programme design could help address the current gap in capacities at UNCT level. Finding ways to ensure that these become longer-term posts in RCOs, such as cost-sharing among UNCT members, will be crucial. Many stakeholders also highlighted the importance of staff mobility across the system in augmenting system-wide skills and knowledge and encouraging more collaborative working. This will entail finding ways to overcome the administrative and other barriers and changing staff incentives to encourage mobility both across AFPs and between AFPs and the Secretariat.

Clearly, ensuring adequate human resources at headquarters and in the field is key to the sustaining peace agenda. The research suggests that, for the most part, AFPs need to invest adequately in the staff they already have – many of whom have first-hand knowledge and skills in the core work of sustaining peace, even if this is not the framework they have been using. Maximising these

capacities may include ensuring greater institutional and system-wide learning and knowledge management, as well as enhanced training in key areas such as conflict-sensitive approaches and conflict analysis. These are low-cost investments that could bring high dividends. Priority could be given to cross-agency learning for staff working on countries where there is an integrated mission, countries that are experiencing conflict and countries at high risk of new, or a relapse into, conflict.

5.2. Financial resources

Access to adequate, predictable and sustained financial resources was highlighted as a major challenge in the country case studies and in interviews with HQ staff. Total

funding of the 16 AFPs looked at in this review was a not insignificant \$27.9 billion in 2015; harnessing even a small part of this expenditure could, in principle, have a sub-substantial impact on sustaining peace. That said, most AFPs' access to the regular budget of the UN system is very limited, and the majority of their funding – nearly 80% on average – is from voluntary contributions (see Table 3). As a result, they are reliant on funding that is invariably short-term, fragmented, unpredictable and earmarked, restricting how they prioritise and invest resources to meet long-term, strategic objectives such as sustaining peace. In addition, some interviewees felt that donor funding for peacebuilding, let alone sustaining peace, was being crowded out by other demands, such as forced migration. Some made the point that, if donor countries wish to spend less on expensive peacekeeping operations, they will need to make resources available for the smaller expenditures needed to prevent conflict.¹¹ Data is not yet available on how much core funding is allocated to sustaining peace, which would have been an interesting indicator of AFPs' commitment to implementing this agenda. The amount allocated to meeting SDG 16 – \$3.8 billion, or 14% of total AFP expenditure in 2015 (see Table 3), probably financed mainly from voluntary contributions from donor Member States – compares to the around \$8.5 billion the UN allocated to peacekeeping in the same period. While interviewees suggested that sustaining peace programming may be underfunded, it is not clear whether the total financial resources for AFPs need to be increased. Reallocating funds within the existing financial envelope to country-level sustaining peace priorities, efficiency gains and addressing gaps in key areas, such as analysis, could increase the peace impact of the current level of AFP expenditures. Making funding more predictable, flexible, sustained and

11 The military expenditures of the 17 largest OECD countries are nearly nine times higher than expenditures on official development assistance, and the point has been made that shifting the marginal dollar from military to aid expenditures might produce a greater impact on security (see Manuel and McKechnie, 2015).

accountable would lower transaction costs and divert the considerable staff resources spent on fundraising – some interviewees claimed that this took up 80% of their time, though this may be an exaggeration – into more productive activities.

There are also concerns around accessing what funding is available for sustaining peace. Many projects or proposals prepared by AFPs are low quality: they are a re-labelling of conventional activities, or lack the features of an implementable project with clear objectives that could achieve intended outputs and outcomes, or are limited by a projectised logic that may have clear outputs but a less clear contribution to significant and cumulative peace impacts. It is however important to note that AFP staff commonly find the transaction costs associated with preparing proposals for mechanisms such as the Peacebuilding Fund excessive, especially considering that the funding on offer is often modest.

Sustaining peace clearly challenges traditional funding practices as it requires long-term, integrated programming and investments that are fully coordinated with peacekeeping and political actors. Appeals to donors based on needs assessed by the UNCT without a prior budget envelope weaken priority-setting and allow donors to cherry-pick according to priorities that are not always aligned with analysis of the most significant drivers of conflict. For example in Kyrgyzstan, 64% of the UNDAF is currently unfunded. Several interviewees noted that over-decentralisation of fundraising was creating competition among AFPs and causing anxiety about job security among their staff. There are incentives for both AFPs and donors to use humanitarian funding to sustain peace since this avoids hard decisions on priorities, and has lower requirements for accountability for results and reporting than development assistance, since donors have a greater risk tolerance for humanitarian action.

Pooled or common funding mechanisms were regarded as helpful in facilitating a more strategic approach by UNCTs that is both more collaborative and more focused on agreed priorities, as evidenced in the MDTF in Colombia and, to an extent, the PBF in Liberia and Kyrgyzstan. Other stakeholders noted recent changes in the scale, scope and administration of pooled funds for development or transitional contexts. Well-designed and -managed pooled funds could clearly play a major role in financing the sustaining peace agenda: they provide a platform for coordination between donors and the UN, offer lower transaction costs, promote country ownership and the alignment of funding with strategy, and encourage accountability between donors and recipients

(see Coppin et al., 2011). Pooled funds can create a platform for coordination among AFPs and with external partners. In Somalia, the Development and Reconstruction Facility (SDRF) illustrates how ‘a broad pooled funding architecture’ can pull together ‘a critical mass of actors ... under a nationally-led framework to address common outcomes’ (UNMPTFO, 2017a: 3).

There is likely to remain a need for a central pooled fund for sustaining peace, in particular to provide timely finance to support country programmes critical for conflict prevention, catalyse innovation and finance pilot activities and fill financing gaps. Expanding the existing Peace Building Fund would be one possibility. In countries with large programmes for sustaining peace, establishing country-level pooled funds could be an option, particularly where the country programme is a priority for potential donors. To avoid conflicts of interest, align funding with sustaining peace priorities and be credible with national authorities, donors and AFPs, such funds would need competent and neutral management, including locating them in the office of an RC with no links to AFPs delivering programmes. Managing pooled funds effectively is not easy, though the recent creation of the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office in UNDP has strengthened capacity in this area across the system, with a focus on understanding existing financing instruments and flows; administering a broad array of country, regional and global UN inter-agency pooled funds; providing advisory capacities for funding initiation; and leading dialogue with the World Bank and other non-UN actors on financing flows, financial instruments and joint financing architectures. Other options for pooled funds involve closer partnerships with the World Bank, which has successfully mobilised and managed large pooled funds such as the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which has paid-in contributions of \$9.7 billion since 2002.

There are also a number of governance options, ranging from parallel arrangements, as in Somalia, to more integrated approaches. Interviews indicated that current donor funding practices are at least in part a function of reservations about the UN’s capacity to manage pooled funds, their ability to achieve their intended objectives and accountability and fiduciary risk. To allay these concerns, senior UN managers could consider initiating a dialogue with leading donors to agree measures to strengthen the credibility of UN-managed pooled funds, possibly leading to a compact in pilot countries for mutual accountability involving UN deliverables, donor financial commitments and clear governance arrangements.

6. AFPs' capacities for sustaining peace: partnerships

The review considered what partnerships AFPs invest in (including with other AFPs, with other parts of the UN system, and with national and local actors), and the nature of those partnerships as they pertain to sustaining peace.

6.1. Partnerships among AFPs at HQ, regional and country level

The field research illustrated some positive examples of more joined-up working within UNCTs. In Colombia, the UNCT has formulated and begun to implement a shared plan of action in support of the peace process, and knowledge and other resources are being shared among UNCT members. This effort has been incentivised, in part, through the MPTE. The process is still nascent, but in general stakeholders within and outside the UN system felt that, with strong leadership from the RC and pressure from key donors and national actors, the Colombia UNCT has developed a stronger sense of unity. Critically, the relationship between the RC and the head of the UN Political Mission was mostly described as positive. The creation of a Joint Steering Committee (including Oversight Groups) in Kyrgyzstan to support peacebuilding programming, planning and implementation is another example of successful cross-UNCT collaboration, and one worthy of comparative study and development. While there is no peace process per se in Kyrgyzstan, the mechanism does provide a central focal point for a limited number of key stakeholders to come together on specific peacebuilding processes within a framework of shared priorities.

Although there is evidence of collaborative working across AFPs at HQ and country level, AFPs are still rarely able to genuinely work together towards common goals. Despite years of effort to 'Deliver as One' and many other innovations, incentives and working methods designed to promote cooperation and collaboration remain weak. As noted, competition between AFPs – for funding, for mandate 'space', for recognition – fundamentally hampers joint or even more coordinated working. In Lebanon, for example, key donors highlighted the continuing failure of the UNCT to capitalise on the comparative advantages of

its members, and criticised AFPs for unilaterally soliciting funding in areas where they had limited expertise (though donors are themselves a key part of the problem given their funding practices and institutional preferences for certain AFPs over others). In many contexts, RCs do not have the skills, authority, tools, financial resources or incentives to force through more effective collaboration amongst AFPs, and have virtually no levers to influence the workplans and behaviour of AFP staff. These shortcomings are recognised in the SG's report *Repositioning the UN development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda – Ensuring a Better Future for All*, which calls for major changes in the authority and impartiality of RCs, strengthening their offices and making AFP heads accountable to RCs for system-wide activities, and for accountability of the UNCT, through the RC, to the Secretary-General. At HQ, several stakeholders noted that there were fewer opportunities than in the past for AFP collaboration or even consultation on operational issues or specific contexts. It was suggested that UNDOCO used to have convening power for such discussions, but its capacity for such coordination has decreased following recent institutional reform. No other mechanism or institution has the authority or capacity to bring the UN system together in such a way.

6.2. Partnerships between AFPs and the UN Secretariat

Most stakeholders from both AFPs and Secretariat departments felt that their relationships had improved in recent years, and pointed to more regular collaboration and information-sharing through mechanisms such as the ISF process, the Global Focal Point (GFP) system, the WGT and in more informal exchanges. Some felt that relations were most effective at the country level, where the imperative for collaboration is more obvious and urgent.

Within the Secretariat, the PBSO plays a key role in bringing the UN system together around the sustaining peace and peacebuilding agendas. It is the central point in the UN for developing overall strategies and policies related to peace, research, internal and external

coordination, the preparation of guidelines for staff and funding for catalytic activities through the PBF. PBSO is also a bridge between member states and AFPs on peacebuilding through its secretariat function to the Peace-Building Commission (PBC). Relations with PBSO were often regarded positively by AFPs interviewed in this review, at both HQ and in the field. The technical support role that PBSO staff have played in advising on the design of sustaining peace programmes was noted by a number of AFPs, and financial support from the PBF was highlighted as key to some AFP country programmes that may struggle to attract bilateral funding.

Collaboration between AFPs and DPA and DPKO related to joint or shared analysis, joint strategising through the development of ISFs and in more informal interactions. DPKO and UNDP both pointed to the GFP system as indicative of positive collaboration between the Secretariat and AFPs working on police, justice and corrections – key programming areas for sustaining peace. Positive views of the GFP model are borne out in the 2014 independent review, which notes that it ‘holds credible promise as an effective tool for the delivery of [police, justice and corrections] assistance to the field’, and that, after less than two years, it had made progress in improving working relations and promoting ‘a positive change of mentality and culture in which silos have been replaced with team construct’ (Durch et al., 2014: 9). With regard to DPA, practical collaboration in the provision of support to field operations was highlighted by UNDP in relation to joint PDA deployments, as well as support provided by the UNRCCA to the UNCT in Kyrgyzstan, including sharing political analysis.

However, some long-standing frustrations between some AFPs and Secretariat departments are still evident. Several AFPs felt that DPA and DPKO do not always share their political analysis (at headquarters or country level). For its part, DPA points out that its analytical functions are bound by capacities and mandates which determine focus areas of analysis, and that AFPs do not understand that access to more sensitive political analysis is necessarily restricted to senior managers. Many AFPs still see DPKO as too dominant and not sufficiently aware or appreciative of what AFPs do in programming terms. For their part, DPKO staff suggested that AFPs tend to over-estimate the nature and impact of their field presence, and consequently their contribution to sustaining peace objectives. Interviewees also indicated concerns among humanitarian AFPs that the PBSO view of the collective responsibility of the whole UN system towards sustaining peace did not always fully appreciate the importance of the neutrality and independence of humanitarian programmes.

The research also indicated that not all Secretariat staff have a clear understanding of the breadth of programming areas that AFPs undertake that contribute to sustaining peace. At HQ, DPA, and to a lesser extent DPKO, staff tended to consider UNDP, and possibly UNOPS and

UN Women, as the only AFPs that make a significant programmatic contribution to peace and security work. The survey results also indicated that some Secretariat staff felt that AFPs are failing to address critical gaps relevant to this agenda, such as youth. In part, the limited understanding of what AFPs do, and how this can contribute to sustaining peace likely stems from the long-standing cultural and linguistic barriers that characterise the UN system, and which have been noted elsewhere (see for example Durch et al., 2014). In part, it also likely relates to the fact that not all AFPs have articulated their role and contribution to sustaining peace. This lack of understanding of the contribution that AFPs can make is clearly hampering the development of closer relations between AFPs and the Secretariat.

6.3. Partnerships with the World Bank

A recognition of the convergence, if not entirely integration, of humanitarian and development responses and the links between security and development is bringing the World Bank Group, itself a specialised agency within the UN system, into closer contact with sustaining peace initiatives within the UN. This is despite differences in governance arrangements and operating practices. In April 2017, the UN SG and the World Bank Group president signed a partnership agreement providing a framework for closer cooperation both at HQ and in the field. Past relations between the World Bank and the UN have been partly transactional, with the World Bank viewing sectoral AFPs as implementing agencies in difficult contexts, and AFPs viewing the World Bank as a source of funding. Under this new, deeper partnership each party brings knowledge, expertise and resources that complement the other. This constitutes a historic opportunity and an openness to build a partnership around the sustaining peace and conflict prevention agendas between AFPs and the Bretton Woods institutions, with a shared focus on addressing the exclusion and inequality that drive conflict, and the poverty and weak governance that enable it to take root. The value of this partnership is evidenced in the Philippines, where the joint UN–World Bank facility FASTRAC is being used to support the ongoing peace process – the only joint entity of its kind.

Specifically with regard to funding, the World Bank’s business model by default provides international public finance through loans, grants or guarantees to governments. This means that funding for UN AFPs is likely to remain a very small part of the Bank’s total portfolio, which amounts to around \$45 billion of new financing approvals a year. Direct grants to AFPs to implement projects and programmes in highly fragile settings are possible, but are likely to be unusual and temporary. Nevertheless, this can be significant where it happens – since 2016, for example, the World Bank has approved grants totalling around \$860 million for

Yemen, mainly for health and nutrition, directly to AFPs including UNDP, UNICEF and WHO, although Bank officials interviewed stressed that Yemen should not be seen as a model for interaction with AFPs. It should also be possible for AFPs to influence World Bank country strategies, particularly for sustaining peace and pro-poor development (an opportunity that may have been missed in Liberia). The International Finance Corporation (IFC), the World Bank's private sector arm, is actively exploring ways to increase its share of investment in fragile situations beyond the extractive industries and mobile telephony, which could involve more blended finance for public-private partnerships, especially for infrastructure projects.¹² The \$2.5 billion International Development Association (IDA) 18 IFC-MIGA¹³ Private Sector Window (PSW) recently created by the World Bank specifically aims to catalyse private sector investment in IDA-only countries, with a focus on fragile and conflict-affected states (FCS), recognising that the private sector is central to achieving the SDGs, and acknowledging that attracting foreign investment and growing the domestic private sector in frontier IDA and FCS markets requires de-risking. The UN can also play a role in ensuring that private investment supports peace by strengthening the voice of civil society organisations, particularly with regard to the extractive industries.

International financial institutions possess considerable analytical capacity – the World Bank has described itself as the 'Knowledge Bank' – that can contribute to a more strategic approach by UNCTs to sustaining peace, often building on information gathered from AFPs. The Bank also has considerable expertise in mobilising funding, including through pooled funds, although its management of these funds has at times been uneven. Interviews indicate that the Bank is open to deeper and more formal engagement in UN country missions and teams where it can contribute its expertise to increase the capacity and effectiveness of both organisations; the recent case of a Bank staff member seconded to the Special Envoy for Yemen illustrates the possibilities.

6.4. Partnerships with national actors

As Mahmoud and Makoond (2017) argue, sustaining peace involves identifying the factors that together contribute to a peaceful society, including social cohesion, inclusive development, the rule of law, accountable institutions, good governance, access to justice and gender equality. This focus on utilising existing societal mechanisms and capacities in a given context makes

sustaining peace primarily an endogenous, ongoing process, which can only succeed if it is highly collaborative and inclusive. Partnerships with national stakeholders – authorities, civil society, women, youth – are critical. As the AGE highlighted, 'the UN's approach to sustaining peace, in all phases, must be underpinned by a deep commitment to broadening inclusion and ownership on the part of all stakeholders across the societies where it works' (UN, 2015a: 47).

The case studies for this review evidence important relationships between AFPs individually and UNCTs as a collective with national authorities in relation to sustaining peace objectives. This includes aligning planning frameworks, responding to government requests for programmatic support, helping ministries through processes of restructuring, reform and development with technical support and advice, and advocating for operational, normative and legislative improvements. Some stakeholders, however, felt that this positive relationship was (in certain contexts) too often premised on AFPs/UNCTs or an RC not significantly challenging a government when its actions or behaviour could undermine peace. In many cases, AFPs/UNCTs appeared reluctant to take a more forceful stance on key issues, such as political exclusion and human rights, for fear of undermining their relationship with the host government, as recently highlighted in Myanmar (McPherson, 2017). There are of course notable exceptions, such as in Liberia where the DSRSG/RC has led advocacy and dialogue on critical issues threatening to undermine progress in building peace. In other contexts, host governments have had individual staff, including senior officials, removed from the country if they are seen as challenging government views or positions, and they have done so with apparent impunity. Stakeholders indicated that it is crucial that the UN adopt a more nuanced and principled relationship with host governments, while also recognising that this is often difficult in practice due to the lack of influence and leverage AFPs and UNCTs have vis-à-vis host governments. AFPs recognise that systemic and structural change takes years, yet even so ubiquitous systems of corruption in central government remain despite clear, consistent and impactful programming on governance, transparency and rule of law. This is an area where a deliberate collective approach could be most useful, with different AFPs and other parts of the UN playing different but complementary roles vis-à-vis host governments to ensure constructive engagement.

There was also criticism from some stakeholders, including AFPs themselves, that the relationship with the

12 See the forthcoming IFC report *Private Enterprises in Conflict-related Situations*.

13 See <https://ida.worldbank.org/financing/ida18-ifc-miga-private-sector-window>. The IFC is the world's largest development institution focused on the private sector in developing countries. It provides and mobilises capital, knowledge and partnerships to address constraints to private sector development. The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA) promotes foreign direct investment (FDI) into developing countries.

host government is often unbalanced, with a common focus on central government to the exclusion of sub-national/local government, and a focus on line ministries with limited engagement with parliamentary bodies (unless they are a specific programme target). The former appears to be changing to an extent, as evidenced by the increasing attention to urban authorities in recent years. The Lebanon UNCT offers a positive example in this respect: in part because of the nature of the country's political landscape, several AFPs have sought to develop strong relations with municipal governments, providing direct technical assistance and other programmatic support. AFPs in the Philippines are also increasingly focusing on engagement with sub-national actors in Mindanao. In Colombia, UN engagement with sub-national government is an important feature of its support for the peace process. In Liberia, the withdrawal of UNMIL, with its ability to access peripheral areas, will present significant challenges for Liberia's unfinished business of decentralisation and the UNCT's ability to work in all 15 counties.

HQ staff of AFPs interviewed generally felt that their institutional engagement with civil society, particularly with local grassroots organisations, is far greater than any other part of the UN system, and is fundamental to their role in sustaining peace. This view was echoed in the online survey, in which 63% rated AFPs' engagement with civil society as good or excellent. Certainly, the review found some good examples of engagement with civil society organisations. UN Women, for example, both supports and benefits from the global network of women's civil society organisations that came together to call for the agency's establishment, enabling it to extend its reach and potential impact far beyond its limited field presence. The Global Acceleration Instrument for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action is designed to ensure women's groups are not only able to receive international funding for peace-related and other programmes, but also that they are engaged in how funds are raised and managed (see UN Women, 2017; UNMPTFO, 2017b). The UNCT in the Philippines has over the last few years re-prioritised its engagement with local civil society organisations in Mindanao, and in Colombia several AFPs have worked with or supported national and local civil society organisations (though this appears to be changing as local actors increasingly regard AFPs, including UNHCR, OHCHR and UN Women, as competitors for funding).

More generally, however, the research for this review suggests that relations between AFPs and national or local civil society organisations are too often more transactional than they are partnerships between equals. In Lebanon, civil society organisations felt that some of the larger AFPs were using them purely as implementing partners and failing to take advantage of their in-depth knowledge of the context and key technical areas. There was also criticism from some stakeholders in Lebanon of the costly and highly inefficient cascading levels of programme

administration, whereby AFPs contract INGOs, which then contract NNGOs to deliver programmes. Clearly this is a systemic problem in many contexts and is not limited to the sustaining peace agenda (Bennett et al., 2016). The 'localisation' agenda outlined at the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) places greater emphasis on establishing genuine partnerships with national and local organisations, but it is not yet clear how far that agenda can go in addressing entrenched habits.

In addition, AFPs' (perceived) support for government authorities tends to damage their credibility with civil society, de facto authorities and marginalised and opposition groups. The UNCT in the Philippines has recognised this and has attempted to gradually shift away from a government-centric approach. As a result it is slowly gaining increased, though by no means widespread, recognition from non-state actors. The relationship with civil society – both national and local organisations – is critical to AFPs' understanding of the context in which they are operating. Civil society organisations should also be a target for support as part of the effort to build national and local capacities to sustain peace – whether as a direct or secondary objective. This was strongly noted in Colombia, including to ensure the voice and protection of an increasingly vulnerable set of actors in a context where the peace process itself is generating new risks and vulnerabilities.

More generally, opportunities for positive engagement with civil society elsewhere are being missed: in Lebanon, for example, civil society organisations interviewed for this review felt that AFPs could have done much more to support their work and develop their capacities. In Liberia and Kyrgyzstan, accountabilities (to communities and cooperating and implementing partners) are far weaker than accountabilities that flow upwards, although AFPs have made serious efforts to include individuals from civil society organisations in programme implementation advisory boards. Such efforts should be commended. Across the case studies, it was generally observed that civil society groups play essential roles in sustaining peace, but that the most competent, capable and legitimate organisations and individuals were the most insecure stakeholders, living with enormous uncertainty and spending too much time applying for and reporting on funding from international actors, including AFPs.

6.5. Partnerships with the private sector

The business practices of the national private sector, its employment practices and its relationship with government can all have a bearing on conflict. Procurement by the UN in developing countries amounted to \$10.3 billion in 2016, of which \$2.4 billion was in least developed countries, including countries affected by fragility. Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan were in the top 20 countries for local

procurement, with contracts worth \$500 million (UNOPS, 2017). How this money is spent can determine whether the capacity of the modern national private sector is enhanced, or whether there is a bias towards incumbent elite business. Ensuring that the RCO has the capacity to guide and review application of UN procurement rules by AFPs, e.g. packaging procurement so that local firms can compete, can help the national private sector to contribute to sustaining peace through promoting transparent contracting practices and helping create employment.¹⁴ Partnerships with the private financial sector are also likely to be increasingly important, and will require different ways of working for AFPs, particularly transferring funds directly to beneficiaries such as community development organisations, and cash transfers to households.

Engagement with a broad range of national actors – not just host governments – is crucial to the UN delivering on sustaining peace objectives. However, this review highlights multiple concerns relating to the way in which many AFPs understand and manage their relations with these actors. Addressing these concerns will not only mean addressing gaps in capacities or knowledge – first and foremost, it requires more robust leadership at country and headquarters

in articulating and defending a more nuanced position for AFPs and UNCTs vis-à-vis host governments, and a significant, long-term investment in *partnerships*, rather than simply contractual relationships, with civil society organisations. Most important of all, it will require making AFPs accountable to national staff, national and local partners and to the people and communities they serve.

Taken in the round, there is consensus among stakeholders in this study that AFPs are not using partnerships to their full potential. In fact, there is an overwhelming sense that, although there have been improvements in recent years, collaboration between AFPs, between AFPs and Secretariat departments and between AFPs and non-UN actors (both national and international) is inadequate. Essentially, there is still little incentive for individual staff and AFPs institutionally to work in a more collaborative way within the UN system or to step back from direct delivery themselves and focus on facilitating delivery by national or local actors where appropriate. Crucially, there is also little incentive for AFPs (or RCs) to engage with national or local actors that are challenging the host government in contexts where its authority is contested or it is a party to a conflict.

14 See for example Glennie et al. (2013).

7. Conclusion and ways forward

Armed conflict, violence and fragility are causing widespread suffering for millions of people, with wider effects that are undermining regional and global peace and security. Clearly, ending the ‘scourge of war’ has never been more urgent. Achieving and sustaining peace in any given context is a hugely ambitious task, and one that requires clear and concerted leadership and action from states and other national and local actors. Without this national ownership, even the full force of the UN system will not be enough. The UN system can, however, be a catalyst for peace: it can facilitate dialogue and encourage national, local and international actors to work together in taking the necessary positive steps to prevent conflict and mitigate its effects, and promote long-term peace and development.

The UN’s agencies, funds and programmes are and should be at the heart of this effort. AFPs have a unique array of technical and other capacities that can and already are directed at addressing the causes, drivers and triggers of conflict. The varied nature of the contributions AFPs can make is illustrated clearly in the research for this review: from supporting government social safety nets in Lebanon (WFP, World Bank, UNHCR) to instituting a government–UN–Habitat–civil society platform for sharing knowledge and practice on addressing land as a cause of conflict (UN-Habitat), from building the capacity of national authorities to address violent extremism and terrorism (UNODC), to the provision of technical guidance and support for national actors on the prevention of extremism through education (UNESCO), and to empowering women’s peace committees in Kyrgyzstan (UN Women).

Considering the sheer breadth of the programmes and activities AFPs undertake, and the complex array of conflict causes, drivers and triggers, it is clear that each AFP has a key role to play in sustaining peace. But this potential is not being fully realised, for a variety of reasons. The recently developed concept of sustaining peace as a system-wide responsibility has yet to fully take root, and few AFPs have elucidated an institutional vision of, or clarified their role in, this agenda. There is no system-wide operational definition of sustaining peace and, in the view of some AFP staff, a lack of clear instructions from the SG and his team as to why and how AFPs should integrate sustaining peace into their work. There are gaps in capacities for delivering on sustaining peace across the

spectrum of AFPs, including in developing more politically smart analysis, particularly shared or joint analysis at country level, and translating context and conflict analysis into more conflict-sensitive programming. Funding is another issue: AFPs reliant on voluntary contributions find it particularly difficult to access predictable, multi-year, unearmarked funding, while AFPs that receive assessed contributions struggle to secure adequate funding for particular capacities, such as coordination and analysis. Long-term impediments related to leadership, organisational culture and administrative barriers inhibit more collective responses that draw positively on the diversity of technical, normative and operational capacities across the spectrum of AFPs, and the general failure to put individual agency agendas to one side and share resources, knowledge and learning is undermining the potential contribution AFPs could make to sustaining peace.

RCs are at the forefront of the UN’s contribution to sustaining peace and the case studies evidenced good practice in this regard. However, long-standing issues, including relating to the capacities of individual RCs and their offices, their authority vis-à-vis AFPs and host governments and at times a reluctance to engage in what are often perceived as ‘political’ activities were all highlighted by AFPs and other stakeholders in this study, as well as in the literature reviewed. Overall, the predominant view among the stakeholders in this review is that, in its current form and function, the RC system does not have adequate capacity to deliver the kind of authoritative leadership at country level needed to drive the system-wide change sustaining peace requires.

Partnerships – relations between AFPs and other UN actors; between AFPs and national or local actors; and between AFPs and other international actors – are also essential to delivering on the sustaining peace agenda. Many interviewees thought that partnerships with the UN Secretariat at HQ and country level had improved in recent years, with positive examples from the case studies and HQ of enhanced collaboration with DPKO, DPA and PBSO. However, respective roles and capacities relevant to sustaining peace are under-appreciated, and opportunities for greater collaboration with DPKO and DPA in particular are being missed. Relations between AFPs and the World Bank have also become much more substantive, with important bilateral and multilateral

agreements, the development of shared frameworks such as the RPBA and Bank funding of some AFP programmes. At the country level, AFPs have an array of relationships with key national actors but they are often not sufficiently substantive or constructive. For some AFP staff and RCs, engagement with governments has become synonymous with support to the central authorities, rather than a nationwide, inclusive and representative agenda of the government and its citizens. ‘Sustaining peace’ may be perceived as inherently political by crisis-affected governments, and AFP activities designed to support sustaining peace objectives may be perceived as a challenge to their authority. The review evidences some positive examples of engagement with national civil society, but often such relations are primarily transactional in nature and, as a result, opportunities for mutual sharing of knowledge, analysis and learning, and for building civil society capacities for the long term, are missed.

The capacities of AFPs to deliver on the UN’s commitment to sustaining peace are also linked to the behaviour of Member States – specifically their granting of the political, financial and operational space AFPs need to get on with their work. The UNSC and UNGA have stated that sustaining peace is a shared endeavour, but currently it is difficult to characterise the relationship between AFPs and Member States as a partnership in the truest sense. Donor funding practices encourage high levels of competition and restrict the kind of long-term strategic planning and programming sustaining peace requires. This behaviour is, in part, a consequence of how AFPs themselves function: donors interviewed for this research pointed out ongoing concerns about cost-effectiveness, waste, risk management and the ability to show demonstrable results. The agenda Member States set for the UN system in the UNSC and UNGA is not necessarily reflected by their representatives on AFP governing bodies, some of whom are sensitive to what they perceive as the politicisation of humanitarian and development programmes.

Clearly, despite the positive examples evidenced in the case studies for this review, the challenges faced by AFPs in maximising their potential to contribute to sustaining peace are significant, and many are entrenched. But the momentum building around this agenda presents an opportunity to address some of these long-standing weaknesses. Critical efforts to reform the system are already under way and, if successful, will address some of the structural challenges inhibiting the individual and collective role of AFPs in sustaining peace. These system-wide reforms must be accompanied by action by AFPs to augment and maximise their capacities to sustain peace.

In terms of ways forward, this review indicates a number of areas for action, as set out below (see also the table of recommendations for additional details).

Implementing the UN’s commitment to sustaining peace will require a sharper definition of what sustaining peace means, and indicators to measure progress towards that goal. This will involve monitoring the effectiveness of AFPs’ contributions, and using this information to adjust and inform programming. The g7+ group of fragility-affected countries, the OECD, UNDP and the World Bank have been working together to agree indicators of fragility,¹⁵ and the UN more broadly can build on this to arrive at suitable indicators for each country context. It will also be necessary to translate these goals into measurable interim objectives for AFPs. The ability to demonstrate measurable success in contributing to sustaining peace will also build the trust and confidence of donor states.

Developing a shared operational understanding of and commitment to sustaining peace across the UN system, including among AFPs, will be essential to translate the concept into more effective support to states and their citizens. This shared understanding and commitment to sustaining peace as a system-wide goal must be based on an understanding of both the comparative advantage of the UN system vis-à-vis other international actors, and of the diverse capacities among AFPs and other UN actors. It must also be based on an increased tolerance of the financial, institutional and other risks of engaging in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Clarity and consistency in articulating this operational understanding – internally and externally – will be required from the UN leadership, from the SG down through global heads of AFPs, RCs and country offices, and through the endorsement of the boards of AFPs.

Integrating this operational understanding into individual organisational strategies, policies and programmes will require AFPs to develop a more sophisticated analysis of their individual role and their impact – from political, socio-economic, human rights and humanitarian and development perspectives. The roles that individual AFPs can play in sustaining peace vary significantly according to mandate, thematic expertise and operational and normative responsibilities. Consequently, each will need to clearly articulate their respective role, both internally and to partners and other stakeholders (including other AFPs, UN entities and Member States). Maximising each respective contribution is also likely to require some adjustments to institutional priorities and ways of working, some reorientation of existing resources and the upgrading and sharing of staff skills and knowledge within and across AFPs.

15 See International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding: http://www.pbsbdialogue.org/media/filer_public/72/7b/727b3ec5-d96d-4acf-bcad-987ee5cb2094/realisation_of_the_sdgs_-_the_role_of_the_new_deal_3.pdf and http://www.pbsbdialogue.org/media/filer_public/72/7b/727b3ec5-d96d-4acf-bcad-987ee5cb2094/realisation_of_the_sdgs_-_the_role_of_the_new_deal_3.pdf.

The brief review of AFPs' capacities to address conflict causes outlined in Section 2 indicates a heavy weighting towards socio-economic factors. While these are traditional programming areas for AFPs, other international actors also undertake this kind of work, including the private sector, INGOs and through bilateral programming from donor states. It may therefore be worth considering what AFPs' particular added value or comparative advantage is in this area. Some shifting of capacities, including resources, towards areas where the UN system at large has specialised but currently limited capacities – such as addressing the environmental and political causes of conflict – may be worthy of consideration.

Partnerships, in the truest sense, must be at the heart of how AFPs understand and seek to address needs relating to sustaining peace. At country level, AFPs' commitment to sustaining peace should be aligned with and directed by the priorities for peace elaborated by governments and their citizens. This may mean allocating more resources and effort to support those working for change in their countries, and those who are most directly affected by conflict and violence, and doing less that supports the interests of the elites who own and/or benefit from the current political settlement. AFPs' strategies must also be closely linked to those of the wider international community, including donor states and IFIs. These changes will require a much stronger RC system to help navigate the tensions between different stakeholders within and outside the UNCT and to fully understand the risks to sustaining peace.

Maximising AFPs' contribution to sustaining peace requires more conflict-sensitive, politically savvy programmes – irrespective of whether programmes are designed specifically to address sustaining peace objectives. This requires significant investment in analytical capacities, including sharing or pooling of existing expertise, frameworks and learning at HQ and in the field. It also requires much greater knowledge sharing, training and guidance on how to integrate this analysis into programming and activities. Collaborations with relevant entities in the Secretariat, as well as with academic institutions, specialised INGOs and the World Bank, may address many of the gaps in these two areas.

More joined-up and collaborative working between AFPs, in UNCTs and between AFPs and other parts of the UN system is fundamental to delivering holistic and coherent support for national and local actors in their search for peace. Joint or joined-up analysis, programming and monitoring and evaluation have particular relevance in relation to sustaining peace, both because of the nature of the challenges achieving peace poses and because pooling capacities – including technical expertise, staffing and other resources – will be the only practicable way to overcome them. Much stronger RC coordination and greater (self-) discipline is required from individual AFPs in understanding their specific role and value within the

UNCT in any given context and, where necessary, standing back in favour of other AFPs or other UN or international entities that may have a particular comparative advantage or greater added value, based not only on mandate but also on capacities, expertise or relations with national/local actors.

Incentivising change will be essential to maximise AFPs' potential in regard to sustaining peace. Incentives will be needed at both individual and institutional levels. Senior leaders and managers in AFPs will need to be appraised in relation to appropriate collaborative working or coordination with other actors on sustaining peace, with career progression conditional on performance in this area. Mandatory system-wide training on the concept of sustaining peace and the role of the UN system in it will be necessary to ensure, as is the case with security and gender, that all staff are equipped with a basic knowledge of what sustaining peace means in operational terms, both generally, and in specific contexts. Human resources policies can be adjusted to allow for the deployment of staff with the competencies necessary to support AFPs' efforts on this agenda. Streamlining the administrative and legal mechanisms that currently impede joint programming models could also result in the more cost-effective use of programmatic capacities.

Common funding or resources with stronger governance arrangements can act as a major incentive for priority setting, selectivity, scaling-up impacts and coordination at country level. Such pooled funding can be aimed at more 'joined-up' – though not necessarily 'joint' – working and sustaining peace results. Identifying shared outcomes or objectives that relate directly to how AFPs can support the people in whose interest they are working can act as an incentive to set priorities and work better and smarter. Setting priorities and sharpening criteria for financing can support innovative pilots and improve the design, scale and implementation of programmes.

An enhanced RC system – with increased authority and operational and financial capacities – is fundamental to delivering on the actions listed above. In line with the recommendations articulated by the SG in his report on repositioning the development system, this review recommends that the requisite personal and professional skills are included in the recruitment and performance management process for RCs; that RCs have increased access to the staff (including PDAs and Human Rights Advisors) they need to discharge their responsibilities relating to sustaining peace; and that they are given greater funds to support joined-up programming by UNCTs.

In order to build confidence in the UN system's capacities for delivering on sustaining peace objectives, it may be useful to institute a preliminary roll-out of a system-wide approach in a selection of priority countries. Focused strategies in these priority countries could include shared analytical and programming processes, supported by expanded common funding for sustaining

peace programming, and greater investment in working in partnership with national, local and international actors. In order to maximise such investments and opportunities, this set of priority countries could be selected from those already identified for the ‘New Way of Working’ initiative.

Finally, building a more strategic partnership between the UN system, including AFPs, and Member States is necessary in order to enable more effective delivery of support to national and local actors in the search for long-term peace and security. Improving the relationship between Member States and the UN system, including AFPs, will require a higher level of mutual trust than currently exists. AFPs will need to demonstrate that they can be more transparent; that they can focus on their mandated responsibilities including as they relate to sustaining peace; that they can continue to uphold the

values enshrined in the UN Charter and the international human rights system; and that they can be more cost-effective and accountable, and can direct available resources towards sustaining peace objectives. Member States will need to demonstrate that they can give AFPs the financial, political and operational space to deliver on their sustaining peace responsibilities, including providing funding that allows them to set appropriate (i.e. longer-term) priorities, work in partnership with other actors and deliver on the areas where they have a comparative advantage. This will also require clear expressions of support for the UN’s engagement in sustaining peace objectives in country and at global level. In particular, Member States’ representatives on governing bodies should clearly endorse their AFPs’ institutional vision and strategy relating to sustaining peace.

Annex 1 Colombia case study: a summary

Summary of key findings

- In 2016, a peace agreement was signed between the Colombian government and the largest armed group in the country, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). The agreement represents an important milestone in the history of conflict in Colombia.
- The UN's work on peacebuilding in Colombia takes place through the UNCT and a UN Political Mission, appointed in January 2016 at the request of the negotiating parties in the peace process.
- Given the UN's half-century presence in Colombia, AFPs have a deep knowledge of the context and established networks and relationships among different stakeholders. The UNCT is well placed to engage with the complexities of the conflict and related forms of violence in Colombia.
- The challenge will be in overcoming competition over priorities and funding between AFPs. This includes reconciling divergent views about their relationship with national stakeholders (including government, CSOs and other relevant national stakeholders).
- The UNCT has stepped up its efforts to improve inter-agency coordination, including through the inter-agency Peace Group. Leadership and increased UN-wide coherence has characterised the work of the RCO and UN AFPs. Sustaining peace is an explicit strategy of the RC.
- Relevant UN AFPs see their role as contributing to addressing conflict and supporting sustainable paths to peace within their organisational mandate. It is not possible to speak yet of a common and shared understanding of what Sustaining Peace means for AFPs, not least given the relative youth of the concept within the UN system.
- In implementing the peace agreement, the fact that the government is in the driving seat is important for ownership and sustainability. But there is a risk that the UN is perceived as too closely aligned with the government to the detriment of its relationship with other actors.
- It is important not to overclaim the Colombian experience – and the UN's role in it – as a success story. Implementation of the peace agreement is taking place in a challenging political and social context; other armed actors, including organised crime groups, remain active, and public opinion on the peace agreement is sharply divided. Impending presidential elections in 2018 further complicate the political landscape.

Conflict context

The UN has been engaging with various aspects of Colombia's long-standing armed conflict and related violence since 1953. The conflict – one of the most protracted and violent in the world (Herzbolheimer, 2016) – has resulted in more than 200,000 deaths, high levels of forced disappearances and kidnappings and almost 7 million internally displaced people (IDPs). At the same time, Colombia is a middle-income country with a long-established democratic tradition and a sophisticated legal framework.

The root causes of the violence are linked to unresolved grievances related to a highly exclusionary political settlement. Colombia has extremely high levels of inequality, and has failed to achieve substantive land reform or any meaningful redistribution of resources. Different forms of violence – conflict-related, political, social and criminal – intersect with entrenched patterns of inequality and discrimination based along class, ethnicity, gender and political lines. In large parts of the country the state has diminished capacity to provide security, justice or basic services, or has been absent altogether in areas controlled by the country's various armed groups, including the largest, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC); the National Liberation Army (ELN) (a smaller armed group which has more recently entered into peace talks with the government); and an assortment of organised crime groups, including drug cartels and criminal bands derived from paramilitary organisations constituted as a non-state response to armed guerrilla groups.

In 2012 peace talks began between the government and the FARC, leading to a ceasefire and disarmament agreement in June 2016 and a peace accord the following September. In October the peace deal was narrowly rejected in a national referendum. The following November a revised peace deal was signed, which included some concessions by the FARC in an

effort to appease those who voted against the agreement. The agreement covers land reform, political participation, illicit drugs, transitional justice and the legacies of violence. Importantly, it also distinguishes between conflict termination, where the key actors are the FARC and the government, and longer-term transformational objectives and reforms, which were the outcome of more participatory processes of consultation with wider groups and interests.

The peace agreement was widely seen by key informants (AFPs, donors, CSOs and NGOs) as a major milestone in a move away from conflict, and one which needs to be supported. At the same time, however, important challenges remain. Colombia is a deeply divided society, as reflected in the referendum result, and upcoming elections in 2018 will add a further layer of complexity to the process. The demobilisation process has been slow, and there are concerns around impunity for armed actors and security and human rights violations in zones being vacated by the FARC and elsewhere, including in relation to increased coca production and the presence of organised crime groups.

While noting the challenges, it is also important to underline, first, that this was a Colombian-driven and -owned process, with international actors playing an accompanying role (the UN was not involved at the outset); second, that among key informants (both national and international actors) there was widespread consensus on the importance of ensuring the peace agreement's success; and third, there is strong awareness of the challenges given the multi-dimensional nature of violence and the legacies of conflict in Colombia.

Scope and scale of UN engagement in sustaining peace

Colombia has the largest UNCT in Latin America, with 21 resident and five non-resident agencies and 2,330 staff. It has a presence in 24 of the country's 32 departments and 46 cities, and there are 138 offices in 102 municipalities. The UN's activities in the country include humanitarian action, development, peace-building and human rights work, accounting for approximately \$304 million in 2016 (split primarily between UNDP (26%), IOM (26%) and UNODC (14%)) (UNCT, 2017; UNDAF, 2015–2018).¹ A UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund (UN-MPTF) in place since February 2016 can call on \$56 million from seven donors (the UK, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Switzerland and Ireland) and two feeder funds (PBF and GAI). By February 2017, 26 projects had been implemented by 20 UN AFPs and CSOs.² A key funding mechanism for UN support for the implementation of the peace accord, the MPTF is grounded in the thematic and territorial priorities for action set out in the national planning strategy relating to the peace process.³

The current UNDAF (2015–2018) was defined in the context of the peace talks. It sets out eight outcome areas in relation to peace-building and sustainable development. These are:

- Reducing violence and supporting peaceful conflict resolution.
- Strengthening citizen participation and local governance through a rights-based approach.
- Supporting preparedness and implementation of the peace agreement.
- Restoring the rights of victims.
- Addressing inequality and advancing social mobility.
- Advancing gender equality.
- Supporting inclusive rural development.
- Supporting environmental policies.

The RC and AFPs are currently engaged in more purposeful inter-agency engagement in support of the peace process, including through the UN MPTF. This includes agreeing a roadmap, and inter-agency coordination.

At the request of the government and FARC, the UNSC was invited to establish a tripartite verification mechanism (including FARC, the government and the UN). A UN Political Mission was established in January 2016, mandated 'to monitor and verify the laying down of arms, and be part of the tripartite mechanism that will monitor and verify the definitive bilateral ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, following the signing of a peace agreement'. The UN Political Mission in Colombia sits alongside a large UNCT. Mission staff underline the very clear boundaries of their first mandate, namely to monitor and verify the ceasefire and the laying down of arms. This has the political merit of protecting the Mission both from the government, and from other actors' perceptions (AFPs and others) either that the Mission is

1 The review focused on those UN AFPs most closely involved in supporting the peace talks, and currently supporting the implementation of the peace agreement. This includes primarily those taking part in the Peace Group. Core UN AFPs in the Peace Group include UNDP, UN Women, UNODC, UNHCR, FAO and IOM (which was invited to take part in this inter-agency space).

2 UNCT PPT UNCT-Colombia 2017; UNDP, 2017, Selection of diagnostic reports (internal document); UN-MPTF, 2015 UN-MPTF factsheet.

3 The CONPES 3850.

encroaching on their work, or that it is consuming UNCT resources. (At the time of the fieldwork the second mandate had not been approved.)

Vision and leadership

The UN's presence in Colombia is oriented primarily towards supporting an end to violence and, currently, the implementation of the peace agreement. AFPs are well attuned to the complexities and nuances of the conflict; commitment to long-term solutions across AFPs is robust, and AFP leadership largely understand the merits of more effective inter-agency coordination. However, it is not clear that all AFPs share the same vision of what it will take to 'sustain peace'. This has less to do with a lack of shared commitment among AFPs to long-term approaches and enduring solutions to addressing the drivers of conflict, and more to do with a range of issues relating to their mandates, different views about what it will take to achieve enduring peace, how they see their role vis-à-vis the Colombian state and society, their strategic position within the wider political economy of Colombia, and finally internal and organisational incentives to secure funding and maintain their relevance.

The current UNCT Resident Coordinator (RC) – as was also said of the previous RC – was perceived among key informants within the UNCT, other donors and government agencies as having a clear understanding of the political engagement necessary to keep pace with the fast-moving complexities of the peace process. This includes strategic engagement *within* the UNCT to galvanise a coordinated inter-agency approach to supporting the peace process, both within the framework of the UN-MPTF and in the broader work of the AFPs that constitute the Peace Group. In addition, the RC is seen as engaging strategically with the Head of the UN Political Mission in managing the relationship between the UNCT and the Mission, and with the government. The RC is committed to ensuring that the sustaining peace agenda is central to defining the UNCT's role in the country. UNDP also appears to be championing the sustaining peace agenda, and other AFPs are clearly invested in the peace process. However, there are differences in the way they articulate their reading of the challenges facing the country. Non-UN key informants noted what are perceived as competing agendas (in terms of priorities and funding) between AFPs.

Thus, while UN AFPs were aware of the sustaining peace agenda as being relevant to their work in Colombia, their strategy and activities derive mainly from their organisational mandate. This defines their approach and engagement with the peace process and development objectives in the country. The long-standing presence of AFPs in Colombia means that they are well aware of the challenges involved in securing transformational gains, and are (to varying degrees) realistic about the contribution they can make. At the same time, the UN-MPTF and the momentum around the peace process and agreement have encouraged inter-agency collaboration and, potentially, a more coherent collective effort within the UNCT to support the agreement's implementation.

Finally, it is important to note that the UNCT's scope for political leverage in Colombia is defined by the role it has been given by the government. The peace process is a locally driven and locally owned process, which the UN has been asked to support. Ownership of the process lies firmly with the government (and FARC). Rather, the political risk for UN AFPs is being seen as too politically acquiescent towards the government, while paying too little attention to the challenges and difficulties presented by the context.

Programming

Drawing on the UNDAF (2015–2018), in 2016 UNCT identified two strategic areas for its support to Colombia (UNCT, 2017): 1) short-term support to stabilisation efforts in critical regions (including FARC cantonment zones and areas previously under FARC influence); and 2) strengthening links between humanitarian assistance, human rights, development and peacebuilding in order to support progress towards the achievement of the SDGs. The UN MTF provides a key funding mechanism for UNCT support to the peace process.

During the peace talks, several UN AFPs played an important accompanying and supporting role, including by invitation from the parties to the talks (noting that the UN was not involved at the outset). This included UNDP support for the organisation and convening of Civil Society and Regional Forums and support to ensure victims' voices and participation (UNHCR, OHCHR and UNDP) and women's participation (UN Women) during the peace talks. For this AFPs have drawn on established networks and relationships with civil society organisations and some state bodies (UNCT 2017; Segura and Mechoalan 2016; KIs).

The following AFPs are named in the peace agreement in relation to concrete components of the accord: UNDP and FAO, to support rural land reform; UNDP and UNESCO, on the reintegration of ex-combatants; OHCHR and UNHCR, in relation to providing guarantees for former combatants and victims' rights and the situation of FARC-EP members in jail; UNODC on the problem of illicit drugs; and UN Women on women's participation and gender mainstreaming across the implementation of the agreement.

Achieving a common, integrated approach among AFPs is challenging, and has required politically agile and innovative thinking. It is intended that the UN-MPTF framework will incentivise inter-agency cooperation and encourage

a more integrated and cross-sectoral approach. Key informants noted the goodwill within the UN Peace Group. In 2016, UNCT held a retreat to coordinate the work of the UN-MPTF. Agreement was reached on approaches to facilitating inter-agency work, including joint development of rapid response diagnostics tools, to develop inter-agency work packages combining rapid response activities and longer-term development strategy; working collectively towards ‘politically smart’ dialogue with key stakeholders within and outside government; and developing interventions informed by conflict analysis and a consideration of the complexity and political economy of Colombia’s history of conflict and violence. These elements of intended ‘ways of working’ are commendable but still very incipient, and it is too early to tell what this will look like in practice over time in terms of substantive changes in inter-agency work, and the impact on support to the implementation of the peace accord.

The UN Political Mission has a clearly delimited mandate relating to monitoring and verifying the implementation of the peace accord, as set out in the peace agreement and outlined in the UNSCR. In practice (as underlined by several key informants), there appears to be careful political footwork between UNCT leadership and the Political Mission to allow for mutual support in order to mitigate potential tensions within the UN family, and to present a coordinated effort vis-à-vis actors in the country, notably the government.

At the same time, delivery is complicated by the difficult political processes afoot. There is a concern that a focus on the success of the peace agreement will diminish the visibility of – and funding to – other conflict-related issues (IDPs, humanitarian needs and human rights violations). There is also a sense that, in practice, short-term gains might be privileged over long-term strategy, and a worry that UN actors are taking over tasks that might be best delivered by national entities (the implementation of state-building processes, for example, might be better led by national actors). Finally, Colombian CSOs perceive that they are being pushed out of the picture of post-conflict stabilisation given decreasing funding and competition for resources, including among AFPs, for UN-MPTF funds. It is still too soon to judge the effectiveness of new inter-agency efforts.

There is no shortage in Colombia of expertise and deep knowledge of the context in the communities of practice that make up the international community – including but not only UN AFPs. UN AFPs have a long history and accumulated capabilities in the country, a deep understanding of the context and established networks and relationships at national and sub-national levels in the areas they engage with. These capabilities are supported by strong technical and professional cadres among Colombians and a thriving civil society working across a range of issues relevant to the conflict. The peace architecture is the outcome of national intellectual leadership.

Measures to support inter-agency cooperation in developing diagnostic tools to inform post-agreement support processes are seen as positive. These tools are designed to identify concrete sub-national needs and conditions, but it is too early to say how they are informing decisions about activities and support. Knowledge management and embedded learning that documents analysis appears to be under-developed, and it was not possible to assess fully how robust systems are in political economy or conflict analysis to inform theories of change. According to some key informants, explicit theories of change seem mostly not to reflect ‘problem-driven’ approaches, but rather fairly standard accounting of programme logics that are solution-driven. At the same time, the UNCT created a joint information and analysis unit (Unidad de Manejo de Analisis e Informacion de Colombia (UMAIC)). The unit was developed on the Humanitarian Information Unit created by OCHA. In light of the need for integrated knowledge management relating to peace and conflict information and data, UMAIC has evolved as an inter-agency project, co-funded by OCHA, RCO, UNDP, UN Women and Switzerland, and it is servicing the whole UN system. The unit provides data management and analysis, GIS mapping and UN project monitoring capacity, drawing on data provided by UN AFPs and public sources. Outputs include infographics and sectoral and regional briefings.

There is increasing reference to finding ‘ways of working’ that are adaptive and flexible but, from what it was possible to cover in the fieldwork, formal narratives of problem-driven, iterative and adaptive approaches seem not to feature strongly. That said, diagnostics exercises seemed to be imbued with a problem-driven spirit, grounded in the context. Moreover, deep knowledge of the context and understanding of the political economy do in practice inform ways of working (to varying degrees) that are politically smart and adaptive to changing conditions. For the most part there is a recognition that AFPs have the capacity to work in politically agile ways. UN AFPs were variably described as giving visibility to conflict and development problems, and engaging in creative ways to give voice to vulnerable groups or to craft politically strategic relationships that secure buy-in from elite actors to advance change or reform, including in relation to women’s rights and transitional justice.

At the start of the peace talks only one woman was present at the table. UN Women brought together the UNCT and other partners at a National Summit on Women and Peace in 2013, which was crucial in highlighting gender issues in peace support efforts. UN Women’s work with the UN system, government and CSOs has helped to increase women’s influence on the peace process in order to advance a gender perspective on the experience of conflict and violence and women’s rights. The peace agreement includes 100 specific gender-responsive provisions (key informants; Bouvier, 2016; Domingo et al., 2015).

Resources and management

The main funding mechanism in the UNCT for support to the peace process is the UN-MPTF. This was established to fund projects related to preparedness, post-agreement stabilisation, confidence-building measures and preparation for and implementation of the peace agreements. The fund includes \$56 million from seven donors (the UK, Canada, Sweden, Norway, Germany, Switzerland and Ireland) and two feeder funds (PBF and GAI). By February 2017, 26 projects had been implemented by 20 UN entities and CSOs, with a presence in 188 municipalities affected by conflict.⁴ Six AFPs have signed MOUs and are engaging in agreed activities.

At the same time, key informants underlined the ongoing challenges involved in overcoming inter-agency rivalry and competition over resources. In the context of the MPTF, there was also concern that UN AFPs would be crowding out national stakeholders (state and civil society actors) by taking on implementation roles for state-building objectives that might be developed by national institutions. Finally, it is important to note the variation across AFPs regarding the proportion of funding that comes from the government.

Partnerships

UN AFPs' long-standing presence in Colombia has enabled the establishment of networks across the territory. Some are seen as closer to civil society, others to the government and state agencies. UN AFPs have their own approaches to working with domestic actors at the national and sub-national levels. These are seen as variably effective in terms of giving voice to different stakeholders and visibility to different dimensions of the history of conflict and violence; encouraging changes in governance or supporting the roll-out of the different mechanisms that have evolved over time (for instance relating to transitional justice) in favour of vulnerable groups affected by the conflict or addressing concrete needs; and building capabilities and addressing the capacity gaps of different stakeholders.

While there is a shared sense of a common direction of travel to support the long-term objectives of peace and sustainable development, there are also differences of opinion about the priority issues. Some relationships were seen as being privileged over others (notably relations with the government), at the risk of undermining other long-term relationships, for instance with CSOs. This is especially so at the sub-national level. There is a concern with overplaying the success of the peace process, including at international level, given the complex legacies of conflict and violence and unresolved structural grievances.

The strategic partnership between the RC and head of the UN Political Mission was described as mutually supportive, but at the same time key informants noted the potential tensions between their roles. For now, the UN Political Mission's mandate is very circumscribed, yet a great deal of political capital has been invested in its success (linked to the success of the peace agreement implementation process), nationally and at the UNSC level. This is not without risks.

The UN should be wary of presenting Colombia's post-agreement context as a success story given that peace implementation is still very incipient – not least because of the multi-dimensional nature of the history of the conflict and related patterns of violence, and the highly polarised political context. As regards UN work, it is still too early to judge whether there has been a fundamental shift in the 'ways of working' that characterise UN AFPs' work, the capacity for inter-agency engagement and the particularities of the UN Political Mission. The Colombian peace process should not be over-sold as a success story of sustainable peace.

4 UNCT PPT UNCT-Colombia 2017; UNDP, 2017, Selection of diagnostic reports (internal document); UN-MPTF, 2015 UN-MPTF factsheet.

Annex 2 Kyrgyzstan case study: a summary

Summary of key findings

- The consequences of past conflicts are still being felt and there remain significant risks and potential for renewed ethnic violence.
- While all AFPs see their work as helping to prevent violent conflict, they did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the concept of ‘sustaining peace’, or the changes it implies for working practices. Funding for sustaining peace was not adequate, predictable or sustained.
- The UN leadership have a sophisticated and deep appreciation of the conflict prevention challenges facing Kyrgyzstan. Some AFP interviewees expressed the view that, in the future, the RC might be better able to equally represent all AFPs if the post-holder was not also expected to represent the interests of UNDP and UNFPA.
- With the SDG Agenda 2030, there is an opportunity to explore developing joint frameworks and processes for measuring and monitoring indicators of change towards a more peaceful, just and inclusive society. There is a great deal of innovative and adaptive practice in UNCT programming, which could offer valuable lessons elsewhere.
- Interviewees (notably staff of Uzbek ethnicity) expressed concern that there do not seem to be consistent mechanisms across the Country Team to monitor national recruitment processes and support a staff balance that reflects the communities the UN is trying to serve.
- Plans in the new UNDAF renew important commitments to a UN Communications Group to jointly implement the ‘Communicating as One’ strategy. Consideration should be given to dropping all logos and adopting the single UN brand on all public communications.
- In cooperation with the Office of the President, the UN has a Joint Steering Committee and oversight group, made up of AFPs and government and civil society representatives, which oversees all peacebuilding programmes supported by the Peacebuilding Fund. This is an important and effective way of coordinating programme implementation.
- Key informant interviews raised the issue of the vulnerability and insecurity of some civil society organisations, and the frustrations and inefficiencies on both sides of the relationship with the UN. UNCT leadership should look at the whole organisational ecology to see if there are ways of redefining their roles and their relationships with those outside the UN system in order to strengthen collective and cumulative impact.

Conflict context

While Kyrgyzstan has experienced more than six years of development with no major incidents of violence, the consequences of past conflicts are still being felt. This includes the legacy of the events of June 1990 that preceded independence, which left more than 1,000 people dead, followed by the ‘Tulip Revolution’ in 2005 and further violence in 2010, in which more than 400 people died and over 400,000 were displaced. All of those interviewed identified the following as the foremost unfinished conflict issues and threats to peace: ethnic tensions, the structural causes of which remain largely unresolved; incomplete democratic consolidation, weak rule of law and endemic corruption and illicit trade; border and cross-border conflicts (including access to water and land); violent extremism related to ‘political Islam’ which, while still relatively small-scale, is increasingly preoccupying the UN and the government; and finally poverty and horizontal inequalities. The triggers and stress factors that could ignite conflict that were most often cited by key informants related to controversial arrests of opposition leaders during periods of high political tension and the potential for renewed ethnic violence.

Scope and scale of UN engagement in sustaining peace

The UN Country Team has 27 members, 12 of them non-resident. The planned collective UN budget is projected to be just under \$46 million per year from 2018. The largest component, UNDP, has 173 staff and consultants and an annual budget of \$12 million. The Resident Coordinator is supported by a small team with specialist peacebuilding analysis and programming skills, including a Peace and Development Advisor, a UN Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat, staff from

the Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy, which has a special political mission with a regional mandate, providing conflict and early warning analysis, and the Swiss foundation Peace Nexus.

All AFPs see their work as contributing to building a stable, resilient and more developed Kyrgyzstan, and some use the language of sustaining peace. Only ten AFPs are named in the new UNDAF as explicitly working for ‘good governance and the rule of law’ (Priority Outcome Two) with the explicit goal of sustaining peace: OHCHR, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNV, UN Women and IOM.

Vision and leadership

The UN leadership have a sophisticated and deep appreciation of the conflict prevention challenges facing Kyrgyzstan. The role of the Resident Coordinator is central in this regard – particularly in co-chairing, with the Deputy Head (now Advisor) of the Presidential Office, the Joint Steering Committee (JSC) for the implementation of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan (PPP). The RC also plays a significant political role representing the Secretary-General in the country, and has relationships with members of parliament and the private sector, as well as NGOs and donor governments.

The UN and the Kyrgyz Republic operate under an agreed Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF – a new framework has been agreed for 2018–22). This supports the government’s overarching National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), running from 2013–18. Since 2013, the UN and the government have been undertaking specific projects under the PPP, overseen by the JSC, comprising the UN, government and parliamentary representatives and selected civil society organisations. This plan, process and oversight structure has enabled a very effective collective focus on the peacebuilding agenda, bringing in AFPs that might not otherwise have had such an explicit programme focus.

The view was expressed in the RC’s office that sustaining peace was already part of their practice before the UN reviews and resolutions. UNDP’s Assessment Development Report notes that ‘peace and development activities in Kyrgyzstan were largely implemented through the Area Based Development approach, which enabled UNDP not only to achieve better synergies in conflict areas, but also to integrate conflict-prevention themes into the activities of the other programmes. Most projects under UNDP’s peace and development programme were implemented jointly with other UN agencies. However, other AFPs interviewed demonstrated neither a clear understanding of the concept, nor of the changes it implied for the working practices of the Country Team (as outlined in the guidance from the PBSO). That said, all AFPs see their work as relevant to helping the government in particular to create a structural, social, economic and political environment where a return to violent conflict is less likely. Key informant interviews did not present much evidence that prevention is consistently operationalised across the Country Team.

It was widely stated that the current and past Resident Coordinators have been deeply appreciated for the leadership roles they have played, and no one questioned the RC’s leadership and commitment to a cohesive UNCT. Nevertheless, while some AFP interviewees felt that the RC maintains a ‘functional firewall’, others recommended that in the future the RC might be better able to equally represent all AFPs as ‘One UN’ in sustaining peace, as well as promoting cohesion and continuity, if the post-holder was not also expected to represent the interests of UNDP and UNFPA.

Programming

Recent examples of the UNCT’s capacity to undertake joint conflict analysis include the 2013 ‘Peacebuilding Needs Assessment’, which brought together various AFPs’ conflict assessment reports and drew widely on interviews and workshops, and the ‘Concept Note on the Prevention of Violent Extremism’, which brought together six AFPs under the coordination of the RC’s office. The Concept Note drew on earlier programming work and important commissioned independent analysis, and was produced with the support of UNDP. The World Bank uses a ‘Do No Harm’ lens, and has a conflict and risk analysis assessment tool that assesses funding decisions against 20 specified criteria. Impressive tools and systems were put in place around the implementation of programmes supported by the Peacebuilding Fund between 2013 and 2016 to record and monitor work and impacts, including an independent Endline Assessment of the Peacebuilding Priority Plan. With the SDG Agenda 2030, there is an opportunity to explore developing joint frameworks and processes for measuring and monitoring relevant and agreed indicators of change towards a more peaceful, just and inclusive society (SDG16+), while making efforts to assess and attribute AFP influence (i.e. through programmes and interventions).

There is a great deal of innovative and adaptive practice in UNCT programming which could offer valuable lessons elsewhere. One area is in UNDP’s support to government on legislative change, with an emphasis on medium- and long-term planning for implementation (including financial planning). Another successful programming area has been regional and cross-border collaborations to prevent and manage disputes over access to water and pasture and over border demarcation and control.

Some, though not all, AFPs have sustaining peace as a clear organisational goal. As a result, some (including UNDP) see their role as programme and project implementers directly addressing violence prevention and peace, and have played a key role in putting peacebuilding on the agenda of national and international institutions. Others are indirectly

contributing through promoting Kyrgyzstan's development and prosperity, but have not embraced sustaining peace as a deliberate goal as recommended in the PBSO guidance and UNSCR 2282. It would be useful to explore and explain why this is important and what it means in practice.

There is some disagreement as to whether the UNCT has set itself an unachievable and unrealistic goal – as one AFP interviewee said, 'we have short arms' – or whether, to the contrary, sustaining peace by definition requires a high level of ambition. Some said that the broad scale of the National Sustainable Development Strategy and the UNDAF, which include promoting access to justice, the capacities of local self-government, a national civic identity and tackling violent extremism, outstrip the resources and capabilities of the UN Country Team to confidently support the government in addressing outstanding conflict threats. Others believe the reverse, and feel that the UN Country Team will be able to support the government, even if with limited resources, and that past successes provide examples to learn from. Either way, there remains a need for alignment with international and national partners, and difficult decisions on priorities will need to be made. Interviewees said that it would be useful for the UNCT to draw on the knowledge of experienced staff and share lessons on what works more widely.

Resources and management

Although a relatively small support team, the Peacebuilding Fund Secretariat and the Peace and Development Adviser play essential roles in championing the sustaining peace agenda, and in coordination, planning, implementation and reporting.

The high calibre of national staff was widely cited, as was the clear value of having staff who hailed from areas most affected by past violence. But it was not clear that these special skills, insights and network relations were always recognised and valued. Concerns were expressed in key informant interviews (notably by staff of Uzbek ethnicity) that there do not seem to be consistent mechanisms in place across the Country Team to monitor national recruitment processes and support a staff balance that reflects the people the UN is trying to serve.

While the institutional interest in separate AFP recognition is understandable, particularly with regard to securing funding, it was clear in key informant interviews that there is little public understanding within Kyrgyzstan of what agencies, funds and programmes are doing and have achieved, or where their international funding is coming from and going. The proliferation of agency logos and the need to take credit for specific work also tends to undermine inter-agency collaboration. Plans in the new UNDAF to extend the mandate of the UN Communications Group to jointly implement their strategy of 'Communicating as One' in line with Delivering as One principles are important in this regard. Consideration should be given to dropping all logos and adopting the single UN brand on all public communications.

While inevitably there will be further pressure to downsize over the coming decade, efforts should be made to ensure that this does not result in unintended centralisation. The UN's local presence in the regions most vulnerable to recurring violence enables essential attention to be paid to local politics and conflicts. Possible efficiencies could be made in relation to back office support – perhaps through considering models currently being employed by development agencies, which use regional 'Administrative Hubs'. This applies to currently disparate operations in regions which are thinly covered.

Funding was not adequately predictable or sustained. According to the latest draft UNDAF, AFPs still need to raise 64% of their funding for the next five years. The costs and consequences (in terms of staff time and the neglect of other priorities) of having to raise \$185 million are serious. Since AFPs raise funds from the same pool of donors and publics, this inevitably results in costly competition, not only between themselves but also indirectly with international and local NGOs. It also means a significant amount of time is spent raising and reporting on these funds. These heavy transaction costs detract from the time skilled staff can spend on sustaining peace. Finally, while there are a number of overseas consultants in the country, greater effort could be made to draw on lessons from international experiences.

Partnerships

In cooperation with the Office of the President, the UN has a Joint Steering Committee and oversight group, made up of AFPs and government and civil society representatives, which oversees and coordinates all peacebuilding-specific programmes supported by the Peacebuilding Fund. This is an important and effective way of coordinating programme implementation. The UNCT also enjoys close and collaborative relations with donor governments and their aid agencies. AFPs have good and professional relations with INGOs working on the peacebuilding and sustaining peace agendas, including Search for Common Ground, Saferworld, International Alert and the Soros and PeaceNexus foundations.

While it is well understood that the UN's mandated relationship is with both the people and the government of

4 UNCT PPT UNCT-Colombia 2017; UNDP, 2017, Selection of diagnostic reports (internal document); UN-MPTF, 2015 UN-MPTF factsheet.

Kyrgyzstan, in practice NGOs are at times seen through a procurement lens, as implementing partners. Communities are seen as beneficiaries; lines of accountability tend to flow upwards to central government and the UN's senior managers, while risks tend to cascade downwards. Kyrgyzstan has a proud history of a vibrant civil society with a strong tradition of social activism, an independent media and professional NGOs, which have played influential roles in the development of a liberal state. Kyrgyz civil society organisations have been supported through working with UN and international partners, and by working with the UN, they are more able to play important and influential roles. UNDP has created a Civil Society Advisory Board, which provides valuable inputs into its work. But the vulnerability and insecurity of some civil society organisations was a recurrent theme in key informant interviews, as were references to frustrations and inefficiencies characterising both sides of the relationship between the UN and civil society organisations.

UN agencies, funds and programmes and the UNCT leadership should look at how to improve partnerships outside the UN system in order to strengthen their collective and cumulative impacts as part of their efforts to support Kyrgyzstan and its people in sustaining peace.

Annex 3 Lebanon case study: a summary

Summary of key findings

- There was varying awareness of ‘sustaining peace’ across AFPs. When asked, all AFPs interviewed felt they made a secondary and/or indirect contribution to peace or stability. They could clearly articulate this contribution, and felt that it was important.
- Judged against UN missions operating in similarly complex and geopolitically important contexts, the RCO and AFPs in Lebanon are more coherent and collaborative. The strong leadership and coherence of LCRP and UNSF processes no doubt helps in this. There is a recognition that the Syrian crisis has potentially destabilising effects, aggravating underlying conflicts and creating new ones.
- Resources are devoted to analysis of conflict drivers at all levels, and concerted efforts have been made to adapt programming around these. But this has often been after problems have arisen. Many actors were slow to move away from a focus on refugees, to the neglect of the host population or more generalised support, such as water management and sanitation.
- Paradoxically, tensions and conflict are at the heart of concerns expressed by AFPs – but conflict sensitivity is selective, externalised and not always underpinned by relevant capacities. Gaps remain, notably with regard to conflict sensitivity – an essential precondition to sustaining peace, but also to effective and ethical humanitarian and development work in general.
- Some aspects of the UN’s relations with government are concerning and appear counterproductive. While there are examples of politically smart approaches at the level of implementation, the actions or activities of parts of the UN risk the appearance of bias and may have the effect of ‘hollowing out’ institutions.
- Long-term vision and the shift in mindset integral to ‘sustaining peace’ is challenging, if not impossible, at the programmatic level given donor timelines and political imperatives. There is a recognition that short-term sector-based approaches are less efficient and effective, and that comprehensive long-term approaches are required. There are government constraints here (for example, relating to the status and future of refugees), but there is a sense that the UN and donors are reluctant to pressure the government any further.
- The UNSF and ongoing joint work planning and risk assessment processes are an important part of enhancing the UN’s collective impact on the drivers of conflict. Plans to move towards area-based programming could help streamline approaches (particularly with municipalities) and maximise efficiency. But the UN has moved slowly on this, and is deeply constrained by structural factors. When compared to the UN status quo, there is a higher than average level of collaboration. When viewed from outside the UN system, the inefficiencies are apparent. Despite significant progress on joint planning, silos are still maintained and incentivised in operations and programming, making it difficult for AFPs to come together to maximise efficiency and impact.
- Ultimately, any shift towards a ‘sustaining peace’ mindset will be constrained by donor behaviour and funding. In this instance, sustaining peace is less about available capacities and more about incentives, structural constraints and political imperatives. In Lebanon, the bulk of aid funding is mainly humanitarian, bilateral and short term. Few resources are dedicated to long-term peacebuilding. Social stability programming, some of which is promising, is handicapped by unrealistic expectations of results and inappropriately short time-frames.

Conflict context

Lebanon, a country of approximately 4 million people, is currently hosting an estimated 1.5 million displaced Syrians (including 1.1 million registered refugees). Syrians do not live in camps, but rather in a variety of informal settlements. Public infrastructure and service provision was overtaxed before the Syrian conflict; the influx of Syrians has pushed it beyond the breaking point in many places. The crisis has exacerbated Lebanon’s problems with low economic growth, high levels of indebtedness and rising poverty and unemployment. Syrians are often accused of putting a strain on infrastructure and resources, as well as taking employment opportunities away from Lebanese.

1 UNSF 2017–2020.

An additional constraint is the absence of a political solution to the conflict with Israel. While the situation along the southern border remains relatively quiet, ‘the risk of miscalculation from both sides remains’.¹ The conflict with Israel is also manifest in the 278,000 Palestinian refugees hosted in Lebanon. Many families have lived in the country for generations, and are likely to remain there until a permanent solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is reached.

While Lebanon’s civil war ended with the Taif agreement in 1989, there has been no discernable reconciliation or transitional justice. The post-war political order hinges on a confessional system designed to maintain a delicate balance of power among different groups. However, it has also enshrined a patronage-based system that is both exclusionary and unstable. The Syrian conflict continues to place a strain on domestic and regional politics, and is seen as increasing the risk of communal tension and violence.²

Scope and scale of UN engagement in sustaining peace

Lebanon hosts a UN peacekeeping mission and a special political mission. The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) was established in 1978 in response to conflict along Lebanon’s southern border with Israel. Following UNSCR 1701 (2006), a UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon (UNSCOL) was established. UNSCOL promotes a whole of Lebanon approach focused on peace and security, supporting state institutions and coordinating international humanitarian and development assistance. UNSCOL follows up on the implementation of 1701 at the political and strategic level, with the Special Coordinator carrying out good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General. The RC/HC/Deputy Special Coordinator role was introduced in 2014 to help the UN mission adjust to the needs of an evolving crisis.

Most AFPs present before the Syria crisis have expanded, and others established or re-established a presence at the onset of the crisis. Many were present at some point previously, either during the civil war or during post-war reconstruction. Their work is coordinated through two main structures: the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) 2017–20, which focuses on the response to the Syrian crisis and includes NGOs, and the UN Strategic Framework (UNSF) 2017–2020, which sets out the UN’s strategic priorities and plans across all UN entities, including UNIFIL and UNSCOL. Due to constraints of time and resources, this case study focuses primarily on the Syrian crisis response. Within this, the review looked at intentional, direct contributions to ‘sustaining peace’. The Social Stability sector work undertaken by AFPs is highlighted as an example of the strategic vision, sectoral coordination and implementation questions at the centre of this review. The review also includes longer-term programming such as UNDP’s peacebuilding project.

Vision and leadership

UN leadership is very much focused on maintaining stability in conceptual and programmatic terms – not ‘sustaining peace’ as a framework per se. While stabilisation may contribute to sustaining peace, particularly in the context of the Syria crisis, sustaining peace encompasses a broader time-frame and range of interventions. In Lebanon, this focus means that prevention and mitigation are immediate priorities; a focus on longer-term root causes is peripheral or absent at strategic level. While there was support for ‘sustaining peace’ as a concept, there was little appetite for addressing many aspects of that agenda given the pressing nature of the Syrian crisis and the perceived lack of political space to look beyond it. On the one hand, one can argue that there is little else the UN can do given the absence of a political solution to Lebanon’s own problems, the Palestinian situation and the Syrian conflict. On the other, one can argue that the UN may unintentionally contribute to the factors driving instability, at least in some ways.³ The UN is working in a context marked by an exclusionary, unstable and clientelistic political order and, while cognisant of this reality, must balance aspirations to address root causes with political and operational expediency. Noting this, a more complex picture emerges at the level of implementation (discussed further below).

When asked, individual AFPs clearly articulate how they indirectly contribute to stability, if not long-term ‘sustaining peace’ objectives. AFPs see conflict awareness and prevention as integral to their analysis, but addressing conflict drivers is secondary to fulfilling their specialised mandates. Nonetheless, all AFPs felt that they made important contributions to stability, and identified clear examples of where they felt they had done this in their programming.

Both the LCRP and UNSF present narratives aligned to prevention and stability goals. The ultimate objectives of the response are two-fold: addressing the needs of Syrian refugees, while ensuring that the crisis response contributes to stability in Lebanon. This has not always been the case in practice. The primary initial response focused on Syrian refugees. The intensifying crisis and significant backlash from host communities and the government around 2013–14 led

2 UNSF 2017–2020.

3 See Reinoud Leenders, *Spoils of Truce: Corruption and State-building in Postwar Lebanon*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2016; Sima Ghaddar, *Machine Politics in Lebanon’s Alleyways*. New York: The Century Foundation, 2016; Lama Mourad, ‘From Conflict-insensitive to Conflict-driven Aid: Responding to the Syrian Refugee Crisis in Lebanon’, Blog Post, *Middle East Institute*, 2016, <http://www.mei.edu/content/map/conflict-insensitive-conflict-driven-aid>.

the humanitarian community to change its approach and influenced the objectives of the UNSF (aiming for greater joint work and a more holistic approach, for example).

It is also worth noting that there is close collaboration among the component parts of the UN, in part through the UNSF. Both UNIFIL and UNSCOL are active members of the UNCT, while also attending Security Management Team meetings. Representatives of UNIFIL and UNSCOL also attend relevant Pillar Working Groups relating to the UNSF. UNSCOL co-leads Pillar 1 on Peace and Security and contributes to other Pillars. UNSCOL and UNIFIL engage with other relevant UN entities (including UNDP and UNHCR) at the technical level to share analysis and other information. Often, this is done with a view to ensuring that programmatic activities are closely linked to (and informed by) advocacy and engagements relating to UNSCOL's mandate.

Programming

Beyond the general mainstreaming of stability and mention of conflict dynamics within overarching strategy documents such as the LCRP and the UNSF, significant analysis has been produced and there are ongoing efforts to consolidate and share data. What country representatives often identified as a gap was the ability to translate useful political and security analysis into operational recommendations. The Social Stability working group's mapping of local tensions, which effectively functions as a conflict early warning system, is one interesting implementation-level initiative to address this gap.

Capacity for conflict sensitivity – a prerequisite to sustaining peace – appears low. A 2015 survey conducted by the Social Stability working group of 91 aid actors across sectors found that under 60% of respondents had an internal mechanism to ensure that their programmes were conflict-sensitive. Less than a third of respondents outside the social stability sector felt that their programmes were conflict-sensitive.⁴ This increased slightly when the survey was repeated in 2017, but organisations outside the social stability sector were still less likely to have mechanisms for conflict sensitivity in place.⁵ When asked about conflict sensitivity or analysis tools at agency level, most individuals interviewed in the course of this research were vague, or implied that this was so central to the approach that it was somehow mainstreamed. They often talked about trusting implementers or local staff to address these issues. Additionally, NGOs, civil society and experts felt that AFPs needed to do more to adhere to a 'do no harm' ethos and conflict-sensitive approach. However, it should be noted that the Social Stability working group is trying to improve its members' understanding of and capacities for conflict sensitivity, and conflict sensitivity now features as a cross-cutting issue in the LCRP 2017–20.

The ability to focus on individual programmes was limited by the broad scope and short time-frame of this review. A range of programmes within the LCRP Social Stability working group make an explicit, intentional and direct contribution to sustaining peace, including solid waste management, community cohesion and resilience programming, longer-term peacebuilding programming and municipal policing. Theories of change within stability-focused work are largely vague, are constrained by various external factors (donors and the government) and often appear unrealistic. Analysis and evidence are globally weak on these issues, and many actors seem to be working in line with assumptions and donor demands. To address this, agencies have established innovative M&E tools, and have sought to develop the evidence base. Nonetheless, AFP staff do not always feel that they can change the situation, even if they know that other approaches would be more efficient or effective. Best practice dictates that long-term vision and predictable financing for genuine conflict resolution work would help maximise impact, yet many donors have until recently been operating on six-month or one-year grant cycles. Unsurprisingly, some AFPs have focused on what they can get done in this time-frame, rather than what is likely to be most effective.

Beyond the Social Stability sector, a range of programmes and initiatives can be seen as indirectly contributing to sustaining peace (and, indeed, contributing to the prevention of future violence). They include UNFPA's work pertaining to gender and peace/conflict resolution and UNRWA's work with Palestinian refugees and its management of settlements. Joint initiatives include programming planned under the UNSF through a revitalised Lebanon Recovery Fund, as well as ongoing programming such as UN-NGO work on cash.

Implemented by WFP, UNICEF, UNHCR and the Lebanese Cash Consortium, the cash programme comprises around 40% of the Syria response portfolio and injects \$20 million into the Lebanese economy each month.⁶ Initially only for Syrian refugees, it now targets 700,000 vulnerable Syrian refugees and 50,000 poor Lebanese. While coming together has been a slow and iterative process, with some AFPs initially creating parallel systems,⁷ AFPs now use the same needs

4 Social Stability working group, *Social Stability Mainstreaming Survey Analysis 2015* (internal document, undated).

5 2017 raw survey data obtained from UNDP.

6 Interview with AFP.

7 Donors insist that they forced UN agencies to join up their programming more closely; AFPs insist that they came together independently to create shared resources and improve efficiency.

assessment, bank agreement, debit card and call centre for complaints, and collaborate on monitoring. However, each agency still uses its own internal mechanisms for funding and logistics. ECHO and DFID are pushing the cash consortium to adopt a more consolidated system that would provide a single cash payment to each eligible Syrian refugee.⁸ In many ways the current system works well, and the UN RC argues that ‘the current approach to cash represents a significant way forward that needs to be given a chance’. However, the RC is also committed to finding ways to improve the system.⁹ From the donor perspective the cash debate illustrates larger issues of territoriality and competition, and how AFPs – and the broader UN system – are structurally configured in ways that can obstruct joint work and inhibit the ability of agencies to come together to maximise their collective impact.

Resources and management

Lebanon is second only to Syria in the crisis financing it receives. The recently established Concessional Financing Facility (CFF), administered by the World Bank, has pledged of \$342 million, and leverages between three and four times this amount in concessional loans to the government.¹⁰ In December 2016, the CFF approved an additional \$45 million for Lebanon, primarily for large-scale infrastructure work.¹¹ The reactivation of a multi-donor trust fund (LRF) from 2006 is also being explored. Aside from funding for infrastructure, aid is mainly humanitarian, bilateral and short term.

Financing for UNRWA is a separate issue, but one of great relevance to sustaining peace. UNRWA relies on voluntary contributions and often suffers shortfalls. As such, it is a graphic example of the cost of under-funding: constant firefighting and funding crises create inefficiencies and make it impossible to plan or invest in longer-term fixes. Resources for peacebuilding have been diverted to the crisis, and there is no long-term funding source for peacebuilding per se. Donor support for the Social Stability sector, which has been consistently underfunded, may indicate low donor appetite for such activities.

Partnerships

The UNSF process has encouraged greater collaboration between UN entities on planning, strategy and coordination. As above, there are some tensions among AFPs, as well as competition and territoriality, but all consulted felt that there has been greater coordination and sharing through this process. UNSCOL and the RC’s office see the next steps in this process as focusing on area-based and joint programming, which implies greater alignment with funding processes.

Individual AFPs generally work closely with partner ministries, and many second or hire staff to work in government. Different UN agencies pursue this differently. Some, generally smaller, AFPs do not hire staff to work in their partner ministries (or do so less often), and say that they are still able to implement activities as planned. However, many AFPs see this as essential in order to implement programmes effectively and reduce corruption. AFPs often feel that they have been forced to create parallel structures within the government. One AFP has seconded some 800 staff, on UN contracts and higher salaries than public servants. The aim was originally to transfer capacity, but the scheme has been running for over two decades, and has given rise to significant public criticism as well as resentment among civil servants. In discussions about these practices, there was little reference to ‘building capacity’, and frequent explicit reference to building parallel systems.

At the local level, the picture is slightly different. For example, implementers within AFPs discussed how they work with mayors from across a wide range of political alignments because what they do is primarily driven by need and based on a joint assessment (the Vulnerability Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Lebanon). Some programmes show strong ownership by the local government.¹² While there are shortcomings in practice, work at municipal level has potential for greater impact if it is less piecemeal and short-term, and pursued in a more sustainable, coherent manner.¹³

Regarding local NGOs, the same problems exist here as elsewhere – i.e. no core funding; limited investment in capacity; being treated as ‘implementers’. Some AFPs are more collaborative than others, but they tend to be the smaller ones who were present before the crisis and have a longer-term outlook. NGOs consulted generally felt that AFPs had not made a significant contribution to the sustainability of their work or the development of their capacities. While not unique to Lebanon, and researchers met only a small number of organisations, they felt that the system was biased towards international NGOs, which they saw as adding an extra and unnecessary layer in subcontracting arrangements. AFPs receive funding from donors, and in turn provide grants to INGOs, which then provide grants to local NGOs to implement programmes, with overhead, monitoring and/or ‘capacity-building costs’ extracted at each level.

8 See A. L. Keith, ‘The Cash Debate in Lebanon’, Humanitarian Practice Network, 31 March 2017.

9 See Letter from Phillippe Lazzarini, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Lebanon, dated 12 April 2017.

10 LCRP 2017–2020.

11 UN, *Stocktaking Report Lebanon Statement of Intent* (internal document, April 2017).

12 Interviews with implementers; see also Adam Smith International, *Lebanon Host Communities Support Project: LHSP Evaluation*, undated.

13 Interviews with implementers; see also *ibid.*

Annex 4 Liberia case study: a summary

Summary of key findings

- Fourteen years after the end of the civil war, profound challenges will continue to threaten Liberia's development and security, as spelled out in the peacebuilding plan mandated by UNSCR 2333 (2016).
- The specific vision and concept of 'sustaining peace' is neither widely understood nor widely practiced among AFPs and their government partners. The requisite changes in current ways of working will require a planned process of change management guided by the UNCT leadership.
- The UNCT, with its enormously reduced capacities for peacebuilding as identified in the recent mapping exercise, will need to clarify what it will do less of, and what its specific residual prevention responsibilities will be.
- Following the departure of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, there is an outstanding question of how to best maintain a high-level good offices function, and it is important that the option for a follow-on political mission, amongst others, is carefully considered.
- There are opportunities and interest in doing more joint conflict analysis across the UNCT, involving the World Bank Group and others.
- Pooled funding (including the Justice and Security Fund) and support from the Peacebuilding Fund was very useful in providing incentives for targeted programming, but huge challenges remain in providing the funding needed to implement the new peacebuilding plan and the national reconciliation roadmap.
- While the degree to which the UNCT engages with Liberian civil society organisations is impressive, NGOs would prefer to be seen as partners of the UN, rather than as sub-contractors. It would be useful to make a priority of consulting on how this system of relations and transactions could be influenced and improved.

Conflict context

Liberia has enjoyed 14 years of sustained post-war recovery, with many milestone achievements along the way. And yet, despite the successes of the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), UNMEER and the UN Country Team of AFPs, there is a clear consensus that profound challenges remain. Governance and security institutions are still less competent than they need to be, and there are strong concerns about the loss of civil servants in the upcoming change of administration. Political parties tend to be self-aggrandising, and corruption, clientelism and impunity are rife. People's lived experience of justice and accessing public services are poor, especially in the counties. As a result, public trust and confidence in the government are low. Poverty and aid dependency are extreme: according to the World Bank, over half of Liberians live in extreme poverty. The burdens of poverty and the benefits of wealth are spread unevenly across the population and between Liberia's ethnic groups. Grievances over land tenure are both a driver and a consequence of conflict. Inter-tribal relations remain contentious, and efforts to deal with the legacies of the civil war and its historic roots in social exclusion have been slow and incomplete. Levels of criminal and sexual violence are rising, and pose serious threats to sustaining peace.¹

Scope and scale of UN engagement in sustaining peace

The United Nations in Liberia is represented by UNMIL. The mission deployed in 2003 and is scheduled to withdraw by 30 March 2018. It has 1,650 staff (including 770 civilians) and a Country Team made up of 16 resident and non-resident AFPs, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The AFPs most engaged on issues directly relating to peacebuilding, security and the rule of law include UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNODC, UN Women, UNFPA, OHCHR, UNAIDS and IOM. The degree of operational integration within the mission varies from fully consolidated (OHCHR) to fully autonomous (UN Women), with some AFPs reporting to regional hubs.

Vision and leadership

The current integrated mission and the AFPs have strong leadership with a clear vision of their respective roles in contributing to development, the prevention of violence and building peace. Key informant interviews consistently cited that

¹ UN Security Council, Sustaining peace and securing development: Liberia peacebuilding plan. Ref: S/2017/282. Date 4 April 2017

the Office of the SRSG and DSRSG/RC were adept at handling the challenging political dimensions of their peacebuilding roles. The UN's coordinated response to the Ebola epidemic is held up as an example of the leadership's proven capabilities to bring AFPs together in times of crisis. A detailed Peacebuilding Plan, negotiated between UNMIL, the UNCT and the government, was submitted by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in April 2017 in response to UNSCR 2333. The plan covers two phases: the first runs up to national elections and the UNMIL drawdown, and the second is to run for the first two years of the new administration to 2020. There is also a recently renegotiated and extended UNDAF.

The specific vision and concept of sustaining peace (as articulated in UNSCR 2282 (2016)) is neither widely understood nor widely practiced amongst AFPs and their government partners in Liberia. As it is a relatively new conceptual development it is not explicitly embedded in the mission mandates. If sustaining peace is to represent a significant change in ways of working, it will need to be realised through a planned process of change management, guided by a commitment from the UNCT leadership to changing the attitudes, perceptions and behaviour of its managers and staff. In addition, the 'integrated transition plans' currently being developed by the UNCT will need to clarify what the UN AFPs will do less of, and what the UNCT's specific residual prevention roles and responsibilities will be, as well as the required resources. Finally, following the departure of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, there is an outstanding question of how to best maintain a high-level good offices function. An Options Paper has been developed looking at three possible scenarios.

Programming

The headline success of the UN mission and agencies has been their role in supporting the build-up and professionalisation of Liberia's security forces, ultimately handing over these responsibilities to the government. The UN mission has a mixed record in strengthening government capabilities, but interviewees suggested that it has helped the Sirleaf government to create an impressive cadre of civil servants and many relatively strong institutions in the public service. The integrated mission's proven capacity to mobilise around the Ebola epidemic (UNMIL, UNMEER and the UNCT) has meant that staff are confident in their shared abilities to 'come together in a crisis'. The integrated mission and the office of the SRSG have shown strong capabilities in mediation and conflict prevention when these roles were critically needed.

The UN mission currently has very strong conflict analysis capabilities, with the full strength of UNMIL's Peace Consolidation Team and staff from OHCHR, the Peacebuilding Fund and UNDP. AFPs all have strong analytical and programming skills, but few examples were given of joint, cross-AFP conflict analysis and, outside agencies working on the peace and security pillar, there was less emphasis on moving beyond conflict sensitivity to sustain peace. The SRSG is regularly provided with high-quality and detailed political and economic analysis drawn from UNMIL's extensive operational reach, including content from UNCT, UNDP, the World Bank, the IMF and the African Development Bank. However, it remains to be seen how these skills can be retained in the UNCT. A recent mapping exercise led by UNDP's Laboratory for Organizational Change and Knowledge found that UNMIL's departure will result in a significant reduction in the UN's technical and operational capacities in areas relevant to the implementation of the new peacebuilding plan. The mission recognised in its recent report to the Security Council that 'the country team will need to design a new business model for development assistance that includes implementation support services to the Government of Liberia, good offices and political support'.

There are opportunities to build on the work currently being done by UNDP and undertake more joint conflict and peace analysis across the UNCT, drawing on the mechanisms of the 'Pillar Group' focusing on peace, security and the rule of law, and an Inter-Agency Programme Team (IAPT). The Pillar Group and the IAPT could consider drawing on other readily available competencies, with the Peacebuilding Office and perhaps other partners in academia and the NGO sector, bilateral donors and resident IFIs. This joint analysis could be followed by joint programme design and planning based on best practice, knowledge and sound theories of change. SCORE (see below) is a good example of such analysis, bringing together UNMIL, UNDP and an NGO.

Key informant interviewees suggested that Liberia needs to remain high on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for several years to come, and the UNCT will require a robust capacity to recognise and understand emerging conflict, in partnership with ECOWAS, MRU and the national authorities. It was suggested that this conflict prevention capacity will need to focus on understanding emerging threats to peace and security, focusing on the inherent inter-connectedness of different types of violence and their root causes. In this regard, UNDP has recently compiled a social cohesion and reconciliation index (see <http://scoreforpeace.org>) building on earlier experiences including that of the Liberian Armed Violence Observatory.

Despite sustained government and UN AFP efforts to tackle endemic corruption and to make progress with national reconciliation, the President herself, in her State of the Union address earlier this year,² highlighted her government's

2 <http://gnnliberia.com/2017/01/23/ellen-delivers-final-state-nation-address-craves-collective-spirit-three-branches-calls-2017-political-forum/>

failures. The disposal of UNMIL assets (with an estimated value of \$143 million) over the next ten months could well have a negative impact if they are withdrawn from the counties or informally appropriated by civil servants, and there were anecdotes suggesting that this was already happening.

The revised peacebuilding plan optimistically commits to passing new legislation on land and decentralisation before the elections, but it is not clear whether this is realistic, or whether the implementation of these reforms has been fully planned and costed. Finally, on reconciliation processes, despite substantial UN support for programming in this area and a Roadmap for National Healing, Peacebuilding and Reconciliation,³ which some interviewees said showed significant progress. It will be interesting to see what the anticipated PBF evaluation identifies as the particular institutional strengths and weaknesses of the UNCT in community engagement in this area. Nevertheless, the government is re-committing to this agenda in the new peacebuilding plan, which includes a policy for implementing reconciliation dialogues at the county level designed to lead to what are effectively decentralised county plans for reconciliation, and UNMIL has carried out a promising pilot in Grand Gedeh county.

Better access to state services remains key to sustaining peace. The UN put enormous efforts into a Regional Justice and Security Programme, with an impressive emphasis on consultation, but the high costs and limited efficacy of a pilot Regional Justice and Security Hub in Gbarnga were widely criticised. Despite the ongoing tensions around land tenure and land concessions and effective programming, UNEP and UN-HABITAT offices and programmes have been closed, although UNDP/UNCT are continuing to support the passage of a Lands Authority Bill.

UNMIL radio was said to be a ‘catalyst asset’, and it plays a very useful role in giving the UN a unified voice. Interviewees confirmed that it is a key asset in keeping the public informed and provides an impartial and unbiased platform to share information with listeners. With a reach across all 15 counties (unlike the other national radio channels), it is greatly appreciated and valued. Key informants suggested that there should be no rush to divest this important asset, and new management partnerships could perhaps be explored.

Resources and management

The UN in Liberia has invested \$8 billion over the last 14 years and has a budget of \$187 million for 2017. UNCT’s combined annual budget is \$120 million – with an estimated \$60 million secured to date. Interviewees suggested that pooled funding (including the Justice and Security Fund) and support from the Peacebuilding Fund had been very useful in providing incentives for targeted programming. A proposal for the establishment of a Liberia Transition Multi-Partner Trust Fund has been approved by the EC with an initial, start-up investment of \$10m from the PBF. A huge challenge remains in that the government cannot meet its own budget to implement the peacebuilding plan or the national reconciliation roadmap. About 87% of the national budget goes on recurring costs, and few funds are available for meeting these peacebuilding priority interventions.

The key challenge is the impending radical reduction in staffing and infrastructure capacities with UNMIL’s drawdown (even now UNMIL only retains a presence in three counties). The mission itself recognises that such capabilities will be essential for supporting the Government’s decentralization efforts. The recent UNDP capacity mapping estimated that ‘the withdrawal of UNMIL’s civilian workforce with direct and indirect contributions to Peace, Security, and Rule of Law will amount to the loss of 239 positions ... As a rough comparison, of the combined workforce of the UNCT AFPs, an aggregate of 27 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) are dedicated to work in the Peace, Security, and Rule of Law outcome areas’. This is probably comparable to the combined number of staff in international peacebuilding NGOs operating in Liberia, and these numbers may drop following withdrawal.

There is likely to be less aid funding available, so more value will have to be made of what can be secured. This is about making efficiency savings, but it is also about an increased focus on transferring skills, and less on delivering infrastructure projects. There should be explicit clarity on what the UN is going to do, and also what it is no longer going to do. This should be clearly communicated to the Liberian public. Interviewees suggested that the Peacebuilding Commission should work with donor governments to identify a possible mechanism and timeframe for sustaining predictable funding for the country team for critical peacebuilding priorities following UNMIL’s departure.

Interviewees said that the fact that Liberia remains an unaccompanied posting for the UN (unlike the US and EU) places a constraint on staff well-being and increases challenges around recruitment and retention. Also, as inequality, exclusion and gender-based violence is such a critical issue, UN leadership should follow through on commitments to

3 Involving, among other things, the construction of ‘peace and *palava* huts’

4 Beber, B., Gilligan, M., Guardado, J., & Karim, S. (2016). Peacekeeping, Compliance with International Norms, and Transactional Sex in Monrovia, Liberia. *International Organization*, 71(1), 1-30. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/international-organization/article/peacekeeping-compliance-with-international-norms-and-transactional-sex-in-monrovia-liberia/A4CEBAC07B57B1DF13DA6E12CDDA9D6C>

putting an end to the historic problem of staff engaging in commercial transactional sex⁴ as a matter of priority, with explicit and enforced cross-UNCT HR policies. This should include a zero-tolerance policy regarding business with commercial establishments (hotels, etc.) which allow or encourage commercial sex workers.

Partnerships

The UN enjoys very close collaborative working relations with the government. Of particular importance for the sustaining peace agenda are the cooperation mechanisms with the National Security Council and its focus group on the implementation of the government's Agenda for Transformation strategy on 'Peace, Security, Justice and the Rule of Law' (co-chaired by the SRSG), the Technical Working Group on Peacebuilding and Reconciliation and the Liberian Peacebuilding Office in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The first partnership challenge for the UN system to tackle is overcoming its own institutional fragmentation. 'Delivering as one' may never be possible in practice, but this does not mean that, as autonomous institutions, the AFPs cannot realise together the shared goal of sustaining peace deliberately, collectively and coherently over time. Although the UNDAF is in itself a comprehensive enough strategy, the sheer breadth and complexity of AFP engagement risks dissipation and neglecting this important agenda. While the UN in Liberia (in a letter to the Chief Executives Board (CEB) in April of last year⁵) concluded that 'the UN system integrates best in response to situations of urgency and emergency' there is 'a glass ceiling to UN integration imposed by the structural fragmentation of the UN system's constituent parts', and that 'there is a need to move towards structural integration'.

It is a fundamental principle that 'the primary responsibility for leading the process for sustaining peace rests with national governments and authorities, including sub-national and local authorities and stakeholders in civil society'. UNMIL has played a sovereignty-supporting role in Liberia, but the direct provision of services has not left behind sustainable human and institutional competencies. The fact that aid dependency has got in the way of sustaining peace (and development) calls for a wider rethink.

While the degree to which the UNCT engages with Liberian civil society organisations is impressive, as is UNMIL and UNCT support to strengthening CSOs and their engagement with them, key informant interviews consistently reported that the transactional nature of these relationships means that too much time and effort is spent on securing and reporting on grants by Liberia's civic leaders. NGOs interviewed would prefer to be seen as partners of the UN, rather than sub-contractors. This is compounded by the fact that, while AFP staff and programmes are responsible to their managers and donors, accountabilities to the people and communities they serve are weak or non-existent. It would be useful to make a priority of consulting on how this system of relations and transactions could be influenced and improved.

Priorities and cooperation could be better aligned between international aid partners, and the UN is uniquely placed for this challenge. While coherence, consistency and shared and deliberate purpose is important among AFPs in support of the government and people of Liberia (and this is clearly the intent of the UNDAF), this is not enough to achieve the goal of sustaining peace. The ambition should be to achieve an even wider alignment to encompass donor partners (including the US government and the EU), international financial institutions, multilateral partners (including ECOWAS, the MRU and the AU) and international NGOs.

In their efforts to support Liberia and Liberians in sustaining peace post-UNMIL, UN agencies, funds and programmes will need to redefine their roles and relationships as part of a radically diminished but still vital community of international support.

5 United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB). First Regular Session for 2016 'Cross-Pillar Integration and Transition: Successes and Challenges in Liberia' UNODC Headquarters (Vienna) Wednesday, 27 April 2016

Annex 5 Philippines case study: a summary

Summary of key findings

- According to AFPs, the Philippines is still at the ‘peace-building’, and not yet ‘peace-sustaining’, stage. The roots of the conflict (political, cultural and economic marginalisation) are still unresolved.
- There is a common vision and strategic framework, which includes both political and socio-economic aspects. However, AFPs have not translated this conceptual framework into an integrated operational approach.
- The key obstacle to collaboration and partnership is the lack of incentives in a resource-poor environment. This makes the UNRCO’s task of coordination particularly challenging. It is expected that, with the new Mindanao Peace and Development Financing Facility, incentives could shift towards greater collaboration.
- AFPs have the capacity to carry out and integrate analysis into programming. However, monitoring and evaluation is weak, not systematic and often non-existent.
- The Financing Facility will provide an opportunity for additional resources for joint analysis, programming and monitoring, and possibly even joint implementation. However, the Facility’s governance architecture must be transparent and accountable, and effective firewalls must be built to separate the management and secretariat functions.

Conflict context

The Philippines has been affected by internal conflict and violence since the late 1960s, with two insurgencies, one by the Moro independence movement, which called for a return of the Bangsamoro area to the independence it enjoyed in the pre-colonial period, and the other a communist movement seeking to establish a socialist nation free from US influence. Over the years, a variety of splinter groups have formed from these two main insurgencies. The Office of the Presidential Advisor on the Peace Process (OPAPP) currently lists five ‘peace tables’ constituting ongoing peace efforts.¹ The most prominent are the Bangsamoro negotiations between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and the talks between the government and the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP)/New People’s Army (NPA)/National Democratic Front (NDF).

Scope and scale of UN engagement in sustaining peace

The UN Country Team (UNCT) in the Philippines comprises 17 agencies, funds and programmes.² Of those, UNHCR is winding down its activities; UNIDO and UN Women are project offices; and UNESCO is a non-resident agency based in Jakarta, Indonesia. It is likely that the UN system will consolidate further in the future, but in the short term AFPs’ presence and level of activities are expected to remain stable. The World Bank, the International Finance Corporation and the International Monetary Fund are also members of the UN Country Team. There is no UN peacekeeping mission in the Philippines, nor has there been one in the past.

The UN has long supported conflict prevention and peace-building through emergency relief and recovery, longer-term development assistance or both. It has sought to strengthen local capacities in early recovery, disarmament and demobilisation, as well as in building a secure and peaceful environment, especially for the poor and marginalised. In the current UNDAF (2012–2018), the UN is providing support to the national peace process and the PAMANA programme.³ This includes support for mainstreaming peace-promoting principles into national and local plans, policies and

1 For a brief history of OPAPP and the peace process see <https://peace.gov.ph/2016/11/brief-history-opapp-peace-process>.

2 FAO, ILO, IMO, IOM, OCHA, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UN-Habitat, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNV, UN Women, WFP and WHO.

3 P Ayapa at MASaganang PamayaNAn or PAMANA is the national government’s convergence programme extending development interventions to isolated, hard-to-reach and conflict-affected communities.

programmes; promoting participatory conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms; enhancing capacities to protect human rights and provide access to justice in conflict areas; building resilience in vulnerable communities through early recovery initiatives and other community development activities; developing conflict prevention, response and monitoring mechanisms for the protection of women, children, indigenous peoples, internally displaced people (IDPs) and other vulnerable sectors; security sector reform; and establishing a broader constituency for peace.

Vision and leadership

AFPs have different understandings of the term ‘sustaining peace’. They still tend to use ‘building’ and ‘sustaining’ peace interchangeably. For many, the Philippines is not yet at the stage where it can sustain peace since peace agreements are still being negotiated. UNDP focuses its peace-building/peace-sustaining activities on four areas – capacity development; support for peace processes; access to justice, rule of law and security; and governance – which are quite distinct from the work of other AFPs. For the technical agencies (e.g. FAO, ILO, IOM, UNFPA), ‘sustaining peace’ is fundamental to their mandates and a core part of their everyday work. They consider implementing socio-economic/livelihoods programmes in conflict-affected areas crucial to building confidence and trust, and to demonstrating a peace dividend to affected communities and ex-combatants.

In 2012, members of the UN Country Team agreed a joint strategy to support national efforts towards lasting peace and sustainable and inclusive development in Mindanao, with a particular focus on areas affected by violence and internal displacement. This strategy, updated in 2016, aligned closely with the government’s National Framework for Peace and Development in Mindanao, which was developed with technical support from the UN and formally launched in February 2017. The exercise was an opportunity to further coalesce AFPs around a common vision, and to build a common understanding of what sustaining peace in the Philippines would entail. The upcoming challenge will be to translate this strategy into an operational plan.

Programming

The international community has been supporting peace-building activities in the Philippines for more than two decades. Various programmes were established focusing mainly on the political aspects of peace-building, funding activities such as transitional justice and dialogue.

UNDP is the only UN agency with the capacity to analyse the political aspects of peace-building. However, according to UN Women there is insufficient gender analysis guiding AFPs’ programming related to peace-building. This is partly because UNDP – and most other AFPs – does not have gender experts among its staff. The exception is UNICEF, which has established a small advisory group of Muslim women to guide its programming, and has staff dedicated to mainstreaming gender. Another area which does not receive enough analytical attention is the evolving nature of the conflicts in the Philippines. While there is good capacity to carry out analysis of vertical conflicts (i.e., the conflict between the centralised state and the MILF, MNLF and the CPP), there is weak to non-existent capacity to assess horizontal conflicts, including the prevalence of *ridos* (inter-clan conflict), issues arising from internal displacement, violence associated with land disputes involving armed groups and the rise of violent extremism as previously criminal gangs and rebel groups associate themselves with Islamic State. AFPs are still working in silos, and mostly look at peace-building either through a political lens or a livelihood one. There is insufficient analysis bringing together political and socio-economic development processes. Most economic development activities are project-based and are not integrated into the peace-building programme.

According to the UN agencies interviewed, the capacity to monitor peace-building activities is weak and not systematic. The capacity to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework and to identify the right indicators for conflict prevention and peace-building has been lacking. Both are now being developed, with the assistance of the Senior Advisor on Peacebuilding, in the context of the preparation of the UNCT’s programmatic offer of support for achieving the government’s Strategic Framework for Peace and Development in Mindanao.

Resources and management

In general, human resources are closely linked to the availability of financial resources (e.g. UNHCR was well-staffed in the past, but is in the process of closing its offices in the Philippines because of budget cuts). UNDP’s human resources focusing on conflict prevention and peace-building wax and wane, though currently it is well-staffed. UNDP is also the only AFP with dedicated staff working on conflict prevention and peace-building. The only agency that has been consistently well-resourced is UNICEF. Finally, OHCHR has recently recruited staff to work on peace and human rights.

Not all agencies have the financial resources to open and staff decentralised offices. UN technical agencies are typically based only in Manila. In contrast, humanitarian agencies have sub-offices that are well-staffed (e.g. UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF). Finally, in addition to the number of staff and technical skills, it is important to ensure diversity in terms of gender and ethnic and religious background; for example, until a few years ago UNDP had no Muslim

Filipino staff, though it has made a conscious effort to recruit staff from Mindanao. In terms of UNRCO staffing, several stakeholders appreciated the fact that the current RC was formerly with DPKO and has extensive conflict prevention and peace-building experience. This is an immense asset in the Philippines. In addition to the RC, a PDA has recently been appointed to the UNRCO and is considered an important resource by all AFPs.

According to the UNDAF, the total amount of financial resources available for conflict prevention and peace-building for the period 2012–18 was \$36,666,932. UNHCR had the most resources dedicated to achieving this outcome, followed by UNDP and UNICEF. However, the UNDAF does not capture the total financial resources available to AFPs since some agencies were able to mobilise additional funds during the period covered by the UNDAF. All AFPs indicated that they are facing challenges in mobilising resources since the Philippines is classified a middle-income country. Furthermore, peace-building programmes in the Philippines have to compete with other conflicts worldwide. The resource-challenged environment means that AFPs are competing against each other for limited resources. This has led to some agencies being perceived as ‘invading’ the turf of others, undermining cooperation and collaboration. The Peace Building Fund (PBF) (2014–16) financed peace-building activities implemented by six UN agencies, UNICEF, FAO, UN Women, UNHCR, ILO and UNDP. AFPs considered it a financing modality that shared resources among different AFPs, as well as providing an opportunity for the six AFPs to coordinate their activities through joint planning and programming (but independent implementation).

AFPs are hoping that the Mindanao Peace and Development Financing Facility will provide a new source of funding, and they are expected to submit proposals through the facility. The government has officially asked the UN to administer the new financing facility, with the RCO acting as its secretariat. It is also expected that the facility will provide an opportunity to design joint programmes. However, there is a risk that AFPs will perceive it as a UNDP facility, and so it will be important that the facility is designed in such a way that UNDP’s roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and there is transparency and accountability.

Among external stakeholders, there is confusion regarding the roles of the UN Resident Coordinator and the UNDP Country Director. Among the UN agencies, the roles are relatively clear, but they are not neatly separated. For example, UNDP, FAO, ILO and IOM are implementing ‘livelihoods’ activities, while UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO provide social services. UNDP positioned itself as the UN agency with a mandate to work on conflict prevention and peace-building, though other agencies are also implementing activities that contribute to these objectives. With the scarcity of financial resources and challenges around resource mobilisation, this has generated strong competition and rivalry.

Partnerships

Several levels of coordination and partnership provide entry points to sustaining peace in the Philippines. The most prominent include the Philippines Development Forum (PDF) working group on Mindanao, which is formally led by the government and co-chaired by the World Bank. It meets annually and therefore may be inappropriate for operational coordination and collaboration. The World Bank also manages the Mindanao Trust Fund, and is a board member of the FASTRAC facility, established in 2013, alongside the government, the MILF and UNDP. The facility finances technical support for the peace process, initially around the BBL and then for the development of the Bangsamoro Development Plan, finalised at the end of 2014. The Protection Cluster, established by UNHCR and the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC), provides another platform for partnership and coordination.

At the level of the UN agencies, there are three coordinating mechanisms for planning and programming: the UNCT, which includes the heads of all the UN agencies and is chaired by the Resident Coordinator. It meets once a month to discuss policy issues; the Mindanao Working Group, established in 2014. All members of the UNCT operating in Mindanao are invited to join.⁴ The group discusses programmes, and UNDP updates it on recent developments in the political process. It is chaired by different AFPs on a rotating basis; and Convergence Hubs. Established in 2015, they do not hold regular meetings, though they could potentially be a good opportunity to coordinate and collaborate at the field and programmatic level. Notwithstanding these three mechanisms, coordination and information-sharing is poor. A culture of cooperation is lacking and incentives for collaboration are weak, resulting in each AFP doing its own individual planning.

The main challenges for effective coordination are three-fold: the weak capacity of the government to coordinate its development partners; insufficient human and financial resources in the UNRCO to effectively coordinate AFPs; and weak capacity at the decentralised level – the Convergence Hubs – to coordinate operational activities. Each agency has its own guidelines, procedures and timelines for implementation, posing challenges for coordination, and each has its own logframe and timeline to follow.

4 The MWG comprises FAO, ILO, IOM, OCHA, UNDP, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNFPA UN Habitat, UNHCR, UNOPS, UNRCO, WFP and WHO.

Annex 6 Terms of reference

Review of capacities of Agencies, Funds and Programmes to sustain peace

Background

The Secretary-General requested in his report ‘The future of United Nations peace operations: implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations’ (A/70/357-S/2015/682, 2 September 2015) that the ‘United Nations Development Group ... take forward a review of current capacities of agencies, funds and programmes’ to aid in sustaining peace. Through this request, the Secretary-General endorsed the corresponding recommendations in the reports of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (HIPPO) and the Advisory Group of Experts (AGE).

In the General Assembly and Security Council resolutions regarding the review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282 (2016)) sustaining peace is ‘broadly understood as a goal and a process to build a common vision of a society, ensuring that the needs of all segments of the population are taken into account, which encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict, addressing root causes, assisting parties to conflict to end hostilities, ensuring national reconciliation, and moving towards recovery, reconstruction and development, and emphasizing that sustaining peace is a shared task and responsibility that needs to be fulfilled by the government and all other national stakeholders, and should flow through all three pillars of the United Nations’ engagement at all stages of conflict, and in all its dimensions, and needs sustained international attention and assistance’. The Member States also note in the resolutions that they look forward to the result of this review.

Objective

The objective of the review is to assess the individual and collective capacities of United Nations agencies, funds and programmes (AFPs) to enable a coherent, integrated and synergetic response of the UN system to support sustaining peace as outlined in the two resolutions.

Scope

In line with the abovementioned understanding of sustaining peace, this review will explore in further depth the capacities of AFPs and the Resident Coordinator system to support efforts aimed at sustaining peace, through (1) building a common vision of society that reflects the needs of all segments of the population, (2) addressing root causes, (3) ensuring national reconciliation and moving towards recovery, (4) promoting reconstruction and development, and (5) preventing conflicts.

For each of these areas the review will:

1. assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of AFP capacities in sustaining peace in partnership with local, national and international actors, including capacities to:
 - a) lead, advocate and champion for sustaining peace;
 - b) conduct, collectively and individually, conflict analysis;
 - c) draw on this analysis for strategic planning and activities design, including ensuring conflict sensitivity;
 - d) coordinate analysis and planning exercises with UN Secretariat entities, including peacekeeping operations and special political missions;

- e) effectively implement activities in conflict-affected settings;
 - f) obtain additional human and financial resources as needs increase, including in transition settings;
 - g) evaluate the effectiveness or impact of such interventions and draw lessons learned; and
 - h) ensure a gender perspective is systematically integrated in conflict analysis, programme design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
2. identify the challenges, gaps and risks encountered by AFPs in building and utilizing capacities to sustain peace; capture lessons and good practices regarding the types of AFP capacities and how they help to sustain peace at the global, regional, national and local levels; and
 3. formulate recommendations on how to enhance AFP capacities to sustain peace and overcome gaps and challenges in order for UNCTs to contribute better to preventing and mitigating conflicts and addressing the root causes of conflicts.

The review will be limited to AFP capacities and not include the UN Secretariat entities.

Methodology

The specific methodology for the review is to be suggested by the implementing institution(s). It should utilize a mixed-methods approach, which could include some of the following activities:

Document review of existing AFP policies, frameworks, guidance and practice at the global and country-level;

Mapping of AFP structures, programmes/projects/activities, processes, partnerships, financial and human resources at the global, regional & country levels;

Survey of AFPs, seeking to gain a wide set of perspectives on key review areas of inquiry, including respondents from AFPs, non-AFP UN entities and external, non-UN actors with direct experience/understanding of the core review issues.

Case studies of four selected countries (Liberia, Lebanon, Colombia and Kyrgyzstan) and one Desk Study (Philippines) in order to have a deeper understanding of the relevance, outcomes, impacts and sustainability of AFP capacities as well as of partnerships forged on the ground to sustain peace. The field case studies will include desk reviews as well as field visits, and the Desk Study will be based on a review of the literature and a small number of key informant interviews. The case studies will be chosen based on the following criteria: (1) mission and non-mission settings, (2) regional diversity, (3) longevity of conflict and UN intervention, and (4) diversity of approaches to preventing or mitigating conflict, or addressing root causes of conflicts. A case study of AFPs at headquarters level will examine the ways in which AFPs collaborate and coordinate at global level, and the capacity they have to support field actions aimed at sustaining peace;

Interviews of key informants in field studies, interviews will be sought with representatives of relevant AFPs and UNCT members, as well as with the Resident Coordinator, government interlocutors, and local and national peacebuilding analysts and practitioners and other operational partners, opposition (where possible) and a selection of diplomatic missions. Individual/group interviews will be semi-structured, based on a menu of questions developed by researchers and in line with the research framework.

Deliverables

The review has five primary deliverables:

- **Workplan:** The workplan will outline the steps, methodologies and timeline for the review.
- **Inception report:** The report will detail the methodology, scope and theoretical background for the review. It will also specify timelines for needed inputs and support from AFPs and the management team to meet a tight timeline (e.g. survey distribution and follow-up).
- **Mapping:** Based on a desk, review, global survey, expert interviews as well as in-depth case studies from the four selected countries (Liberia, Lebanon, Colombia, and Kyrgyzstan) and one Desk Study (Philippines), a ‘mapping’ will be carried out that outlines structures and resources at the global, regional and country levels.
- **Draft report:** The draft report will outline suggested overarching findings and suggestions on how to further strengthen AFP capacities to sustain peace.
- **Final report:** The final report will contain the consolidated findings and suggestions contained as well as the case studies from which they are drawn.

Annex 8 List of interview questions

Analytical dimensions for review	Review questions			
Dimension 1	Review Question	Review Criteria	Indicator	Means of verification
Leadership: Vision, strategy and policy	How do AFPs conceptualize their role(s) in sustaining peace? In what ways do they aim to contribute to prevention and peacebuilding, within the scope of their mandates?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness - Relevance and coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coherent, consistent articulation of this role in policy and programme documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy/policy documents - Other external reviews and studies - Self-assessment questionnaire distributed to AFPs - Interviews with key UN stakeholders at global level
	Do you have a clear, coherent and achievable strategy for sustaining peace with a single, overarching set of challenging outcomes, aims, objectives and success measures?			
	How do they see their role(s) in relation to broader UN system efforts for sustaining peace (including peacekeeping and special political missions), and to what degree are their capacities aligned with these? What are the challenges for future delivery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness - Partnership and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coherent, consistent articulation of their role in relation to the broader UN system in policy and programme documents - Meaningful participation in key fora, mechanisms and initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with key UN stakeholders at country level
Dimension 2	Review Question	Review Criteria	Indicator	Means of verification
Programming: Analysis, planning, program design and delivery	What are the capacities of the AFPs to conduct, collectively and individually, conflict and peacebuilding analysis?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness and efficiency - Relevance and coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joint context analysis and conflict mapping among AFPs conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country level document review (strategies, policies, external documents such as the UNDAF, etc.) - Self-assessment questionnaire distributed to AFPs - Interviews with key UN stakeholders at country level
	What capacities exist for AFPs to utilize conflict and peacebuilding analysis for strategic planning and program design, including but not limited to ensuring conflict sensitivity?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effectiveness - Relevance and coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporation of conflict analysis and sensitivity within program plans and designs - Instances where analysis has informed programming for new or innovative approaches to intervention or led to changes in programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Evaluations, external reviews and studies
	How effective are the AFP's implementation capacities in sustaining peace? What gets in the way of better delivery?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance and coherence - Effectiveness and coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instances where AFPs draw upon sound human, technical and financial resources to achieve outcomes aimed at sustaining peace 	
	What capacities exist to ensure that a gender perspective is systematically integrated in analysis, program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance and coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporation of gender perspectives in relation to peace in policy and programme documents and reviews/evaluations 	
	With specific regard to sustaining peace, what capacities exist to evaluate the effectiveness or impact of interventions? What capacities exist to draw, share and operationalize lessons learned?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance and coherence - Sustainability - Partnerships and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New approaches and adaptations are encouraged and evident. - Lessons are shared across and within AFPs 	

Dimension 3	Review Question	Review Criteria	Indicator	Means of verification
Resources: Human and financial; and structures, processes & incentives	Are there adequate human and financial resources in place to deliver on AFP objectives with regard to contributing to sustaining peace? If not, what is required? How do you manage performance on this goal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance and coherence - Effectiveness and coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adequate level of staffing, appropriate staff profiles and predictable funding/budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Country level document review (strategies, policies, external documents such as the UNDAF, etc.) - Self-assessment questionnaire distributed to AFPs - Interviews with key UN stakeholders at country level
	What capacities exist to obtain additional human and financial resources as needs increase, including in transitions settings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relevance and coherence - Effectiveness and coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective recruitment and training, effective fundraising and advocacy with donors 	
Dimension 4	Review Question	Review Criteria	Indicator	Means of verification
Partnerships: Synergies with others – UN, international, national and local partners – for outcomes at a greater scale than by acting alone.	What capacities exist to coordinate analysis and planning exercises with other AFPs and other relevant stakeholders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact and efficiency - Partnership and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective coordination and collaboration within the UNCT and with other AFPs more generally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy/policy documents - Other external reviews and studies - Self-assessment questionnaire distributed to AFPs - Interviews with key UN stakeholders at global level
	What capacities exist to coordinate analysis and planning exercises including in integrated settings with peace operations?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact and efficiency - Partnership and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Effective coordination and collaboration with the wider UN system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with key UN stakeholders at global level
	What capacities exist to coordinate and collaborate with national and local level stakeholders, towards the aim of sustaining peace?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sustainability - Impact - Partnership and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dialogue and relationship with national and local government around sustaining peace - Dialogue and relationship with non-state actors, civil society, affected populations and other relevant stakeholders around sustaining peace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interviews with key UN stakeholders at country level - Interviews with key donors/partners at country and global level

Annex 9 Online survey

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

Online Survey

This survey is being conducted by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), at the request of the UN Working Group on Transitions (UNWGT). It is part of a review of the capacities of UN agencies, funds and programmes (AFPs) to deliver on the UN's mission to prevent conflict and sustain peace. The survey is aimed at collecting data on the FAO, ILO, IOM, UN-Habitat, UN Women, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UNRWA, WFP and WHO and is designed for respondents who either work for, or are familiar with, one of these AFPs.

The Review team will use the definition of 'sustaining peace' outlined in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, namely:

- 1) Building a common vision of society that reflects the needs of all segments of the population.
- 2) Addressing root causes of violent conflict.
- 3) Ensuring national reconciliation.
- 4) Promoting reconstruction and development (with clear links with peacebuilding).
- 5) Preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict.

By using the phrase 'sustaining peace' rather than 'building peace', we wish to capture a broader agenda within the UN. The agenda to 'sustain peace' emphasises a move from short term to longer term approaches, from silos and fragmentation toward comprehensive, coordinated approaches and towards improving resource availability. Sustaining peace is also seen as a shared responsibility that needs to be integrated or mainstreamed in the work of the UN system throughout the life cycle of a conflict – and UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes (AFPs) have a vital role to play in this process.

The review team will explore four broad dimensions of capacity to deliver on the mission of sustaining peace:

- 1) Leadership: vision, strategy and policy.
- 2) Programming: analysis, planning, programme design and delivery and monitoring and evaluation.
- 3) Resources: human and financial, and the structures, processes and incentives to mobilise and manage them.
- 4) Partnerships: synergies with others, including national and local partners to achieve outcomes at a greater scale than by acting alone.

This survey is being conducted in conjunction with a series of qualitative interviews in four case study countries and at HQ.

The review team will prepare a final report based on the information collated through these processes in May 2017.

Respondents to this survey will remain anonymous and the information provided will be handled in strictest confidence (the survey is configured to omit respondents' IP addresses in survey results).

To preserve anonymity, it is not possible to save answers and complete the survey at a later stage. Based on feedback from piloting this survey, respondents took between 15 and 30 minutes to complete.

You will be offered the opportunity to provide additional information, including the possibility of uploading files, at the end of the survey. You may also provide additional information by contacting [Ivor Jones](#).

This survey will provide important quantitative data on the UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace and we thank you in advance for your time in taking part..

If you have any further questions or face technical problems completing this survey, please contact: [Ivor Jones](#)

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

Getting Started

* 1. Are you completing this survey on behalf of an AFP?

Yes

No

* 2. What is the name of the AFP?

* 3. What is the location of the AFP?

4. Do you work for the UN?

Yes

No

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

Getting Started

* 5. For which area of the UN do work?

* 6. In what location do you work?

Please specify country

* 7. Name the AFP that you are most familiar with

N.B.: This AFP will henceforth be referred to as 'your chosen' AFP -- please respond to subsequent questions in relation to this AFP specifically.

* 8. Please describe your professional role and organization

* 9. In what location do you work?

Please specify country

* 10. Name the AFP that you are most familiar with

N.B.: This AFP will henceforth be referred to as 'your chosen' AFP -- please respond to subsequent questions in relation to this AFP specifically.

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

UN AFP Survey - Vision

* 11. Does your AFP have a clearly articulated vision of its contribution to sustainable peace?

If yes, please describe briefly

* 12. Do you think that your AFP has an impact in preventing conflict and sustaining peace?

UN AFP Survey - Leadership

* 13. Does the UN system in your country (or at HQ for HQ based respondents) have adequate capacity in terms of leadership to deliver on the goal of supporting sustainable peace?

If not, please explain in brief terms

UN AFP Survey - Programming

* 14. In what programme area does your AFP make a contribution to sustaining peace? (e.g. rule of law, DDR, livelihoods, etc.)

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

UN AFP Survey - Programming

* 15. How well does your AFP integrate gender into its analysis with regard to sustaining peace?

- 1 - Poor
- 2 - Fair
- 3 - Okay
- 4 - Good
- 5 - Excellent

* 16. How would you rate your AFP's conflict sensitivity in terms of its:

	1 - Poor	2 - Fair	3 - Okay	4 - Good	5 - Excellent
Strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programme design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programme implementation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

UN AFP Survey - Resources

* 17. Does your AFP have adequate staff capacities, financial resources and/or technical resources to contribute to sustaining peace?

If not, please specify which capacities are inadequate (e.g. staff capacities, financial resources or technical resources)

* 18. Does your AFP have adequate internal processes and structures in place to deliver on its contribution to sustaining peace?

If not, please explain.

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

Copy of page: UN AFP Survey - Synergies

- * 19. Does your AFP have the capacity to effectively coordinate with other AFPs in relation to its contribution to sustaining peace? (e.g. on analysis, planning, and the implementation of activities.)

If not, please specify in which area(s) capacity to coordinate is insufficient (e.g. on analysis, planning or the implementation of activities)

- * 20. Does your AFP have the capacity to effectively coordinate with other UN entities in relation to its contribution to sustaining peace? (e.g. on analysis, planning, and the implementation of activities.)
N.B.: Other UN entities such as DPA, DPKO, DFS, PBSO, OHCHR, OCHA, political or peacekeeping missions, RC office, etc.

If not, please specify in which area(s) capacity to coordinate is insufficient (e.g. on analysis, planning or the implementation of activities)

- * 21. How inclusive are your AFP's strategic and programming processes relating to sustaining peace of the following non-UN actors?

	1 - Not at all	2 - Limited	3 - More or less	4 - Inclusive	5 - Very inclusive
National authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civil society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

UN AFP Survey - Synergies

- * 22. Taking a general view of AFPs (either at HQ or field levels), please indicate how you think they collectively make an effective contribution to sustaining peace (at global or country level). This may include collective vision, programming design and implementation.

This may include collective vision, programming design and implementation.

- * 23. Taking a general view of AFPs (either at HQ or field levels) again, please indicate how you think they are less effective in terms of their collective contribution to sustaining peace (at global or country level).

Non-AFP Survey - Vision and Leadership

- * 24. Do you feel that your chosen AFP has an impact on preventing conflict and sustaining peace?

Non-AFP Survey - Programming

- * 25. In general, how would you rate the quality of conflict sensitivity of your chosen AFP in terms of its:

	1 - Poor	2 - Fair	3 - Okay	4 - Good	5 - Excellent
Strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programme design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Programme implementation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

Non-AFP Survey - Programming

* 26. In general, how could your chosen AFP strengthen its programmes (including design, delivery and monitoring and evaluation) to enhance the contribution towards sustaining peace?

* 27. In general, how well does your chosen AFP integrate gender into its analysis with regard to sustaining peace?

- 1 - Poor
- 2 - Fair
- 3 - Okay
- 4 - Good
- 5 - Excellent

Non-AFP Survey - Resources

* 28. Do you feel that your chosen AFP has adequate staff capacities, financial resources and/or technical resources to contribute to sustaining peace?

If not, please specify which capacities are inadequate (e.g. staff capacities, financial resources or technical resources)

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

Copy of page: **Non-AFP Survey - Synergies**

- * 29. Does your chosen AFP have the capacity to effectively coordinate with other AFPs in relation to its contribution to sustaining peace? (e.g. on analysis, planning, and the implementation of activities.)

If not, please specify in which area(s) capacity to coordinate is insufficient (e.g. on analysis, planning or the implementation of activities)

- * 30. Does your chosen AFP have the capacity to effectively coordinate with other UN entities in relation to its contribution to sustaining peace? (e.g. on analysis, planning, and the implementation of activities.)

N.B.: Other UN entities such as DPA, DPKO, DFS, PBSO, OHCHR, OCHA, political or peacekeeping missions, RC office, etc.

If not, please specify in which area(s) capacity to coordinate is insufficient (e.g. on analysis, planning or the implementation of activities)

- * 31. How inclusive of the following actors are your chosen AFP's strategic and programming processes relating to sustaining peace?

	1 - Not at all	2 - Limited	3 - More or less	4 - Inclusive	5 - Very inclusive
National authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local authorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civil society	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- * 32. Taking a general view of AFPs (either at HQ or field levels), please indicate how you think they collectively make an effective contribution to sustaining peace (at global or country level).

This may include collective vision, programming design and implementation.

Independent review of UN AFPs' capacities to sustain peace

Non-AFP Survey - Synergies

- * 33. Taking a general view of AFPs (either at HQ or field levels) again, please indicate how you think they are less effective in terms of their collective contribution to sustaining peace (at global or country level).

Open Questions

34. Are there any specific recommendations you would make to UN AFPs in general in terms of enhancing their contribution towards preventing conflict and sustaining peace?

35. Is there anything else you would like the review team to be aware of?

36. If you would like to upload any supplemental materials or recommend other reports please do so here

Choose File

No file chosen

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